

THE  
MEDIEVAL TOWN PLAN  
AT  
DUMFRIES

The  
Medieval Town  
Plan  
at  
Dumfries

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# DECLARATION

As required by Regulation 2.4.15,  
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I hereby declare with regard to this  
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Dumfries):

- a) this thesis has been composed by  
myself, and
- b) the work is my own.

signed

*Final corrections suggested at Oral examination  
completed 30.3.79 W.A.Godd*

# ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Title of Thesis ..... THE MEDIEVAL TOWN-PLAN AT DUMFRIES  
.....

The continuing conservation of the special character of the historic centres of old burghs is culturally valuable today and its achievement is seen basically as a matter of the conscious maintenance of the varied patterns of their ancient street-patterns and plot boundaries. Advances in the study of the medieval towns of Scotland during the last decade have placed a new emphasis on the planned character of these settlements, placing them in the context of the 'planted' towns found elsewhere in western Europe in the twelfth century.

This study of Dumfries points to the inadequacy of the information available for the history of the town as a basis for formulating policies and designating areas for conservation. It demonstrates a methodology of inquiry whereby the effects of the regional setting are interpreted in historical terms, and the evidence for the history of the town and its structures and buildings is explored chronologically. The historical topography of the settlement is next examined using all available cartographic sources and then proceeding by the technique of plan-analysis to read the evidence for the ancient layout recorded in the street-pattern and plot-layout in the 1st edition of the 25" Ordnance Survey plan of 1858. The form of the early site of the town is tentatively reconstructed on the O.S. base, and the stages of the foundation and development of the town-plan during the medieval period are reconstructed from the evidence gathered. Conjectural plans on an accurate map base are the best way of presenting the historical evidence for use in the planning process.

The historical part of the study shows that Dumfries was probably founded with a simple planned layout c. 1166. The Analysis of the town-plan shows that it may have been extended c. 1200 to almost twice its original size, and that the early medieval period of its planning was characterized by the use of 'long-plots'. In the later medieval period 'short-plots' were used.

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The officers of the Edinburgh University Library, the National Library of Scotland, West Register House at Edinburgh, the Scottish National Monuments Record, the Ordnance Survey Office in Edinburgh, the University of London Library, the Institute of Historical Research in the University of London, the Ewart Library Dumfries and the Hertfordshire County Library Service, have each displayed their customary courtesy and efficiency in providing information and access to material in their custody.

At Dumfries I am indebted especially to the following for help and information : Mr. A.E.Truckell at the Burgh Museum, Mr. Cooper at the Ewart Library, Mr. Lawrence Wilson and Mr. David Booth of the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council's Planning Department, and Mr. John Curry of the Department of Technical Services, Nithsdale District Council.

Last but not least my thanks are due to my wife Joy for her patience, for making the writing possible and for typing the results.

William Dodd, 1978.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

In this study the titles of works have been cited in the abbreviated forms recommended in the List of Abbreviated Titles of the Printed Sources of Scottish History to 1560, published as a supplement to the Scottish Historical Review of October, 1963. Abbreviations not included in that list have been given in a similar form.

### Aberdeen Burgh Recs.

Early Records of the Burgh of Aberdeen, 1317, 1398-1407, ed. W.C.Dickinson (SHS. 1957).

### Adams Urban Scotland

Ian H.Adams The Making of Urban Scotland London.1978.

### Anderson Annals

A.O.Anderson Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers London, 1908.

### A.J. Conservation Areas

'Conservation Areas: Preserving the architectural and historic scene' Architects' Journal 18th Jan. 1967, 123-212.

### A.P.S.

The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, ed. T.Thomson and C. Innes (Edinburgh 1814-75). N.B. reference is to red page-numbers.

### Armitage Castles

Ella. S. Armitage Early Norman Castles of the British Isles. London, 1912.

### Armstrong Liddesdale

R.B.Armstrong The History of Liddesdale, Eskdale, Ewesdale, Wauchopedale and the Dabateable Land. Part I from the Twelfth Century to 1530. Edinburgh 1883.

Ayrshire Coll.

Collections of the Ayrshire Archaeological and  
Natural History Society (1947 --).

Ballantyne Routes in Nithsdale

J.D.Ballantyne 'Natural Determinants of Routes in  
Lower Nithsdale' Dumfriesshire Trans. 3rd Ser. Vol  
XI (1925) 10-21.

Ballard Theory of Scot. Burgh

A.Ballard 'Theory of the Scottish Burgh' Scottish  
Historical Review XIII (1915) 16-29.

Barbour Castle

James Barbour 'The Castle of Dumfries' Dumfriesshire  
Trans. Vol.18 pt. 1 (1907) 48.

Barbour Greyfriars

James Barbour 'The Greyfriars Convent of Dumfries and  
its Environs' Dumfriesshire Trans. N.S. Vol.23 (1911)  
18-35.

Barbour Maxwell House

James Barbour 'The House of the Maxwells of Nithsdale  
at Dumfries' Dumfriesshire Trans. Vol.18 pt.1 (1907)  
186-92.

Barrow Cumbria

G.W.S.Barrow 'The pattern of lordship and feudal  
settlement in Cumbria' Journal of Medieval History  
i, No.2 (1975) 117-38 (Amsterdam).

Barrow Feudal Britain

G.W.S.Barrow Feudal Britain: The Completion of the  
Medieval Kingdoms 1066-1314, London 1956.

Beresford New Towns

M.Beresford New Towns of the Middle Ages: Town Plant-  
ation in England Wales and Gascony London 1967.

Bliss Cal. Papal Reg.

W.H.Bliss Calendar of Papal Registers, Letters. i,  
1893.

Brooks Urban Archaeology

N.P.Brooks 'Urban Archaeology in Scotland' European  
Towns: their archaeology and early history. M.W.Barley,  
ed. Academic Press London 1977, 19-33.



Brooks & Whittington St. Andrews

N.P.Brooks and G.Whittington 'Planning and growth in the medieval Scottish burgh: the example of St. Andrews' Trans. Inst. British Geographers. New Ser. Vol.2. No.3. (1977) 278-95.

Brown Castles

R.Allen Brown English Castles. London 2nd. rev. ed. 1976.

Brown, Taylor & Colvin Hist. King's Works

R.A.Brown, A.Taylor & H.M.Colvin The History of the King's Works. London,I. 1963.

Bryce Grey Friars

Willaim Moir Bryce The Scottish Grey Friars. Edinburgh 2 vols. 1909.

Buchanan Traffic in Towns

C.Buchanan Traffic in Towns: A study of the longterm problem of traffic in urban areas. London 1963.

Cal. Docs. Scot.

Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland. ed. J. Bain. Edinburgh. 1881-88.

C.B.A. Buchanan Report.

Council for British Archaeology The Buchanan Report and Historic Towns. London 1964.

C.B.A. Historic Towns

Council for British Archaeology Historic Towns London. 1965.

C.B.A. Planning Process

Council for British Archaeology Historic Towns and the Planning Process. London. 1966.

Chron. Melrose

The Chronicle of Melrose (Facsimile Edition), ed. A.O.Anderson and others. London. 1936.

Chron. Melrose (Stevenson)

Chronica de Mailros (Bannatyne Club, 1835).

Conzen Alnwick

M.R.G.Conzen Alnwick, Northumberland: A study in town plan analysis (Inst. Brit. Geogrs. Publ. No.27) revised. London 1969.

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M.R.G.Conzen 'The Use of Town Plans in the Study of Urban History' in H.J.Dyos ed. The Study of Urban History. London. 1968, 113-30.

Conzen Townscapes

M.R.G.Conzen 'Historical Townscapes in Britain' in J.W.House ed. Northern Geographical Essays. Newcastle. 1966, 56-78.

Cowan Med. Parishes

Ian. B.Cowan The Parishes of Medieval Scotland 1967.

Cowan & Easson Med. Relig. Houses Scot.

Ian B.Cowan and D.E.Easson Medieval Religious Houses in Scotland 2nd. ed. London 1976.

Defoe Tour

Daniel Defoe A Tour through the whole island of Great Britain (1724-6) Pat Rodgers ed. Penguin Books 1971.

Dickinson and Duncan Scotland to 1603

W.Croft Dickinson Scotland from the Earliest Times to 1603 Third edition revised and edited by A.A.M.Duncan. Oxford. 1977.

D.N.B

Dictionary of National Biography ed. Sidney Lee. London. 1909.

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W.A.Dodd 'Ayr: a study of urban growth', Ayrshire archaeol. Nat. Hist. Collns. 2nd Ser. X (1972) 302-82.

Donaldson Origins

Gordon Donaldson 'The Origins of The Burgh' EDINBURGH A Symposium B.C.Skinner (ed.) Univ. of Edinburgh, Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies. 1975.

Dumfriesshire Trans.

Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society (1862--).

Dunbar Hist. Arch. Scot.

J.G.Dunbar The Historic Architecture of Scotland London. 1966.

Duncan Making of the Kingdom

A.A.M.Duncan Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom  
(Edinburgh History of Scotland, i) Edinburgh 1975.

Duncan Perth

A.A.M.Duncan 'Perth: the first century of the burgh'  
Trans.Proc. Perthshire Soc. Nat. Sci. 11 (1974)  
30-50.

Dunlop Ayr

Annie I. Dunlop ed. The Royal Burgh of Ayr : Seven  
Hundred and Fifty Years of History. Edinburgh. 1953.

Edgar History

Robert Edgar An Introduction to the History of  
Dumfries (1746) first publ. R.C.Reid ed. Dumfries 1915.

E.R.

The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, edd. J.Stuart and  
others (Edinburgh 1878-1908).

E.S.C.

Early Scottish Charters prior to 1153 ed. A.C.Lawrie,  
Glasgow. 1905.

Fife Ct. Bk.

The Sheriff Court Book of Fife 1515-22. ed. W.C.Dick-  
inson (SHS. 1928).

Forsyth Urban Hist. bibl.

W.Forsyth 'Urban history in Scotland: an introductory  
bibliography' Urban History Newsletter No.8. (1967)  
8-14.

Fraser Annandale

W.Fraser The Annandale Family Book. Edinburgh 1894.

Geol. Survey

Geological Survey: The South of Scotland. J.Pringle  
(ed.) Edinburgh. 1935.

George Southern Uplands

T.N.George 'Drainage in the Southern Uplands: Clyde,  
Nith and Annan'. Trans. Geol. Soc. Glasgow. xxii. 1-34.

Gourlay & Turner Dumfries

Robert Gourlay & Anne Turner Historic Dumfries: the  
archaeological implications of development (Scottish  
Burgh Survey) Glasgow Univ. 1977.

Graham and Truckell Solway Harbours

A.Graham and A.E.Truckell 'Old Harbours in the Solway Firth'. Dumfriesshire Trans 3rd. Ser. Vol. 109.

Groome Gazetteer

F.H.Groome Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland. Edinburgh. 1884.

Halliday Old Houses

T.A.Halliday 'Note on Some Old Burgh Houses' Dumfriesshire Trans 3rd. Ser. xix, 1935, 92-3.

Harley Guide

J.B.Harley & C.W.Philips The Historian's Guide to Ordnance Survey Maps. London. 1964.

Harley Maps

J.B.Harley Maps for the local historian, A guide to British sources. London. 1972.

Harvey Medieval Architect

John Harvey The Medieval Architect. London. 1972.

Heighway Erosion of History

C.M.Heighway ed. The Erosion of History: Archaeology and Planning (Council for British Archaeology) 1972.

Hewison Dumfriesshire

J.K.Hewison Dumfriesshire (Cambridge County Geographies) Cambridge. 1912.

Hist. Atlas. Scot.

An Historical Atlas of Scotland c.400 - c.1600. ed. Peter McNeill and Ranald Nicholson, St. Andrews. 1975.

Holyrood Liber

Liber Cartarum Sancte Crucis (Bannatyne Club, 1840).

Houston Burgh

J.M.Houston 'The Scottish Burgh' Town Planning Review. 25.(1954-5) 114-27.

I.C.H.C. Mapping Scot.

The Mapping of Scotland. prep. by organising committee of IVth International Conference on the History of Cartography at Edinburgh 1971. Edinburgh. 1971.

Johns Explanation

W.H.Johns 'Historic Towns' Cartographical Bulletin  
(Society of University Cartographers) Liverpool  
University, July 1970, 14.

Kellett Glasgow

J.R.Kellett 'Glasgow' in M.D.Lobel ed. Historic Towns : maps and plans of towns and cities in the British Isles. vol. I, London. 1969.

Keith Trade Privileges

Theodora Keith 'The Trading Privileges of the Royal Burghs of Scotland', English Historical Review 28, (1913) 454-71, 678-90.

Kelso Liber

Liber S. Marie de Calchon (Bannatyne Club 1846).

Lawrie Annals

Annals of the Reigns of Malcolm and William, Kings of Scotland, ed. A.C.Lawrie. Glasgow 1910.

Lindsay Burgh Architecture

Ian G. Lindsay The Scottish Tradition in Burgh Architecture (Saltire Soc.) Edinburgh 1948.

Lobel Historic Towns

M.D.Lobel ed. Historic Towns : maps and plans of towns and cities in the British Isles, London Vol.1, 1969.

Macdonald Royalty

J.C.R.Macdonald 'The Royalty of the Burgh of Dumfries: a Prevalent Misconception Explained'. Dumfriesshire Trans. 3rd. Ser. i, (1913) 341-7.

McDowall History

William McDowall History of the Burgh of Dumfries with notices of Nithsdale, Annandale and the Western Border. 1867 : rev. and exp. 2nd. ed. 1873: 3rd. ed. with notes by T.Wilson 1906: 3rd. ed. repr. with supplementary chapter 1972.

MacGibbon & Ross Cast.and Dom. Arch.

David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland. Edinburgh. 1887.

Mackenzie Burghs

W.M.Mackenzie The Scottish Burghs. Edinburgh , 1949.

McWilliam Scot. Townscape

Colin McWilliam Scottish Townscape . London, 1975.

Melrose Liber

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Murray Early Burgh

David Murray Early Burgh Organization in Scotland.

Glasgow, 2 vols, 1924-32.

N.S.A

The New Statistical Account of Scotland. Edinburgh

1845 (Dumfries in vol. iv, 1-28).

Neilson Origins

G.Neilson 'On some Scottish Burghal Origins'

Juridical Review xiv. (1902) 129-40.

Neilson Dumfries

George Neilson 'Dumfries : Its Burghal Origin'.

Dumfriesshire Trans. 3rd Ser. ii (1914) 157-76.

Nicolaisen Town Names

W.F.H.Nicolaisen et al. The Names of Towns and Cities in Britain. London. 1970.

O.S.A.

The (old) Statistical Account of Scotland Drawn up from the communications of the Ministers of the different parishes. by Sir John Sinclair, Edinburgh 1793. (Dumfries is in vol. v, 119-44).

O.S. Description

A description of Ordnance Survey Large Scale Plans Chessington 1947.

O.S. Roman Brit.

Ordnance Survey : Map of Roman Britain 3rd Ed. Chessington 1956.

Powicke & Fryde Brit. Chron.

F.M.Powicke & E.B.Fryde eds. Handbook of British Chronology 2nd ed. London. 1961.

Pryde Burghs

G.S.Pryde The Burghs of Scotland: A critical list. (revised A.A.M.Duncan) O.U.P. London. 1965.



Pryde Dumfries. Burghs

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G.S.Pryde 'The Origin of the Burgh in Scotland' Juridical Review. 47 (1935) 271-283.

Rae Scottish Frontier

Thomas I. Rae The Administration of the Scottish Frontier 1513-1603. Edinburgh 1966.

R.C.A.H.M. Dumfriesshire

The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments & Constructions of Scotland Seventh Report with Inventory of monuments and constructions in the county of Dumfries. Edinburgh 1920.

Reid Dumfries

R.C.Reid (ed.) An Introduction to the History of Dumfries by Robert Edgar (The Records of the Western Marshes Vol.1) Dumfries 1915.

Renn Castles

D.F.Renn Norman Castles in Britain. London 1968.

R.H.P.

Register House Plan (with appropriate numerical reference) in the collection of the Scottish Record Office at West Register House, Edinburgh.

R.R.S.

Regesta Regum Scottorum, ed. G.W.S.Barrow (Edinburgh, i, 1960; ii, 1971).

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Scott Franck's Memoirs

Sir Walter Scott ed. Richard Franck's Northern Memoirs. Edinburgh 1821.

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G.W.Shirley 'The end of the Greyfriars convent of Dumfries and the last of the friars'. Dumfriesshire Trans. 3rd Ser. i. (1913) 303-41.

Shirley Dumfries

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G.W.Shirley 'The Market Cross of Dumfries' Dumfriesshire Trans. Vol. 18 pt. 1 (1907) 201-14.

S.H.S.

Scottish History Society.

Simpson and Webster Mottes in Scot.

G.G.Simpson and B.Webster 'Charter evidence and the distribution of mottes in Scotland'. Chateau Gaillard V (1907) 175-86.

Skelton Survey

R.A.Skelton The military survey of Scotland 1747-1755. Royal Scot. Geographical Soc. Edinburgh 1967.

Smart St. Andrews.

R.N.Smart 'The sixteenth-century Bird's Eye View plan of St. Andrews'. Ann. Rep. St. Andrews Preservation Trust for 1975, 8-12.

S.R.O. List of Plans

Scottish Record Office A Descriptive List of Plans by Ian H.Adams. H.M.S.O. Edinburgh i, 1966; ii, 1970.

Stell Mottes

Geoffrey Stell 'Provisional List of Mottes in Scotland' Appendix 1 to G.G.Simpson and B.Webster 'Charter evidence and the distribution of mottes in Scotland'. Chateau Gaillard V (1970) 175-86.



Stewart Mints

Ian H. Stewart 'Scottish Mints' in Mints, Dies and Currency ed. R.A.G.Carson 1971, 165-289.

Thomas Britain and Ireland

Charles Thomas Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times A.D.400 - 800. London 1971.

Thomas North Britain

Charles Thomas The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain. London 1971.

Tivy South of Scot.

Joy Tivy 'The South of Scotland' in J.B.Mitchell (ed.) Great Britain: Geographical Essays Cambridge 1962, 473-87.

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The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: The County of Dumfries. G. Houston ed. Glasgow 1962.

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Watson Celtic Place-Names

William J.Watson The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland. (Rhind Lectures 1916) Edinburgh 1926.

Whitehand & Alauddin Town Plans

J.W.R.Whitehand and K.Alauddin 'The town plans of Scotland: some preliminary considerations', Scot. Geogr. Mag. 85 (1969) 109-21.

Whittow Geol. Scot.

J.B. Whittow Geology and Scenery in Scotland  
(Penguin Books), Harmondsworth 1977.

# Introduction

## INTRODUCTION

The truth about the history of a town is always worth pursuing, not only for its own sake but also as a possible basis for informed action. Consider the difficulties of a well meaning (but hypothetical) Planning Officer faced with recurring pressures for new developments in the central area of an ancient burgh. He might also receive advice from highway engineers that streets there needed to be widened, corners rounded off and that new traffic circulation patterns and car parks were required soon to meet the expected needs of the future. If, as one would like to expect, the Planning Officer was himself convinced that the centre of this historic town had a pleasing traditional character and picturesque layout which ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> well worth looking after so that others might enjoy ~~it~~<sup>them</sup> in the future, then to convince the elected representatives forming his Planning Committee that this was a proper policy for them to adopt, he would need to found his arguments on detailed and accurate information.

He would normally have no difficulty in establishing the feasibility of implementing such a policy. From his own professional knowledge he could point to towns successfully conserved by the local planning authority's insisting that new uses are fitted into existing buildings, that any new building respects the established character of the street, and that the existing layout is preserved by satisfying new traffic requirements outside the sensitive parts of the central area. Understandable difficulties would arise however, when he needed to show on a plan of the town the extent and the boundaries of the area of the historic centre and to demonstrate the significance and chronology of the different parts of it, to make sure that the right areas would be looked after





in the best way and for the proper reasons.

For such specific local historical information he would have to go beyond his normal sources of reference and seek what help might be available from other disciplines. Inevitably the information gathered from the works of local historians would have to be evaluated and then plotted on a plan possibly for the first time. To see how adequate such sources may be, consider briefly the views of various writers concerning the origin, layout and early development of Dumfries, the ancient burgh in south-west Scotland, with which this study is chiefly concerned.

#### I. Robert Edgar 1746

Robert Edgar, writing in the mid-eighteenth century, was the first local historian to give his views, and later writers owe much to him. He wrote that:

'It is most probable it was at first only a little village situated on the said River without a Bridge on the south west. Whoever was [sic] the persons and whatever the motive of situating the beginnings of Habitation or Society in this place, was certainly by divine Providence determining them to fix their abode so conveniently and corresponingly to the ends of living and subsistance in a Society; and surely this situation hath been so intended by the conveniency of the River, on the one hand west toward Galloway, and a large Moss on the north east called Lochermoss, between which and the town are convenient fields and Burrow Aikers, none of the worst soils to cultivate for producing Corns for sustenance of the Inhabitants. And .... the Monks and Friars had no doubt the direction of the buildings .. ...' (Edgar History 21).

On the difficulties in finding out about the history of the town even in his own day, he adds that:

'The antiquity of Dumfries cannot be at first accounted for when a Village or when People at first gathered to

it for inhabitation, because neither the Town's Charters nor Records spared and saved from embezzlement can give any clear information thereof, but must be guessed at by collateral Histories..... It is supposed it was a Villa sometime before Anno. 1000.' (ibid. 23).

Edgar seems to have taken it as self evident, rather than worth arguing, that the town started as a village and that this was the result of people's gathering there and forming a settlement. He was more explicit on this, when he wrote that:

'As to the supposition of the first Inhabitants of Dumfries, they were certainly a collection of persons from the adjacent counties and particularly craftsmen, viz., Smiths, Wrights, Weavers, Taylors, Shoemakers, Fleshers &c., to whom were gathered in these times country people for work or conveniency of living. But these being generally poor and unable to build houses, it is asserted by Tradition that in process of time by some Acts of Parliament or Council, the neighbouring Heretors were obliged to build houses for their conveniency in Burghs, especially after the time of Robert Bruce in Anno 1305'. (ibid. 31).

Here Edgar seems to have had a clear grasp of the economic function of a burgh as a service-centre and employer of surplus labourers for the surrounding countryside. He went on to number the many fine town-houses of the nobility and gentry in the town. He also described the layout of the town as it existed in his day, explaining that,

'The streets of the Town are, from the Townhead... in three turns southward, the main street beginning at the Friers Vennelhead down to the Cross and Midsteeple, and thence turning a little southward to the Southward port or gate, thence a little more south-west to the Milnburn bridge, and then south-eastward to St. Michael's Work, the Old Kirk.....' (ibid. 23).

This description is still adequate for understanding the shape of the town, but it is helpful to remember that there were two fords across the river in earlier times, one approaching the foot of Friar's Vennel which led to the top end of the High Street, and the other, and possibly the more important, approaching the low-lying area at the foot of the High Street just north of the Mill Burn bridge, now called Nith Place.

Robert Edgar clearly regarded the town's layout from Town-head to St. Michael's church as being unitary. He nowhere speculated about one part being older than another. He also projected back to the foundation period of the settlement the economic function of the town in his own day, presuming that this was sufficient explanation for its existence then and for its origin. The process of foundation he saw as one of craftsmen and country people for their individual reasons spontaneously collecting at this favourable site and creating the settlement of their own volition. Edgar implied some sort of growth in that he assumed that first there was a village and then the burgh he knew.

This is a widely held and little questioned assumption even in our own day. It is part of a very old but unhistorical conception that the origin of settlements in earlier times and their subsequent extensions normally proceeded by piecemeal addition of single plots and houses, i.e. that they

'grew up'. This idea fails to explain the ordered layout of even quite small settlements and completely ignores the quite different conditions of society in the medieval period. Then the lower orders were allowed a very limited freedom of action, landowners were wary of developments by others on the land which was their chief wealth, and the crown had a monopoly of licencing market towns (burghs).

Edgar did not in fact use the phrase 'grew up' nor make any



suggestion on the question of how the village he assumed there had been previously became the burgh he knew. He noted the regularity of the closes leading into the burgh plots down the High Street and in Lochmabengait (the chief road leading into the burgh from the east) but he may never have seen a plan of the town's layout, so that the implications from the ordered layout, that the burgh may have been planned to be the shape he described, seem to have escaped him. The tacit assumption that the settlement 'grew up' and 'grew' there-after, colours the views of most subsequent writers on Dumfries, to a lesser or greater extent.

## II. William McDowall 1873

In its four editions to date, William McDowall's History of Dumfries has been the most influential work in forming local opinion as to the origin, nature and present significance of the medieval town-plan at Dumfries. The 2nd edition was the last to be seen through the presses by McDowall before he died and can be taken as giving his views most accurately.

The name 'Dumfries' is Gaelic for 'the fort in the brushwood' and McDowall suggested that to 'the Scoto-Irish, the credit must be given of having built the castle which originated the town....' (McDowall History 2nd. ed, 20). He suggested further that 'long before that date a Selgovian fortlet on the same site may have been planted down and become the germ of the Burgh' (ibid. 21). He went on to scout the possible geographical determinants for its origin acknowledging help on this from an earlier manuscript 'History of Dumfries' by Dr. Burnside.

'In considering a question of this kind, natural influences, in the absence of written documents, may sometimes be profitably consulted; and .... there are two which especially claim attention: the first, a defile or pass in the mountain range overlooking the town on the west, through which the Scoto-Irish from Galloway would proceed when entering Nithsdale; and the second

is the shallowing of the Nith just before the site of the town is reached rendering the stream fordable by persons crossing it in an opposite way from Cumberland. That under such conditions as these, a small colony of Scoto-Irish should, in the ninth or tenth century, 'have been planted down on the left bank of the river, is highly probable; and a few of the settlers may even have tenented their rude cabins sometime before a fortress rose to give a name and protection to their humble village' (ibid. 21).

Here McDowall seeks to place the origin of the burgh in an appropriate historical context and uses geographical factors which could still be appreciated, as relevant to the argument. The word 'village' occurs in the last line of the quotation and seems there to signify merely a small settlement. He went on to give his views on the development of the town's layout, writing that:

'We can easily fancy to ourselves a band of .... Celts .... crossing the Nith in their curraghs, or wading it at the fords, they would occupy at first only the drum or low, shrub-covered hill-side -- up which the oldest street of the Burgh runs -- in order to maintain close communication with their friends in Galloway. Eventually growing more confident, they would, we suppose, creep a little north and south, thus giving a cross-like form to their colony; and by-and-by build for their defence a peel-house, the progenitor of several future fortresses, at the top of the acclivity. Friars' Vennel, the street first referred to, is unquestionably the most ancient portion of the town; and we are inclined to think that it and a small part of High Street, with a few adjoining outskirts, formed the Dumfries of the eleventh century. Soon afterwards, on being constituted a royal burgh, it must have expanded rapidly: the main thoroughfare running down nearly half a mile to the Church of St. Michael's, houses rising up in Lochmabengait, and

all around the Castle at the head of High Street, and forming as a whole no inconsiderable town' (ibid. 21).

Here William McDowall suggested that in the eleventh century before the burgh was created Dumfries already consisted of a settlement centred on Friars Vennel and the area at the head of the High Street, next to an early fortress. He also argued that 'on being constituted a royal burgh, it must have expanded rapidly' to the full extent of the later town from Townhead to St. Michael's Church. He summed up this elsewhere when asserting that:

'The founder of Dumfries is unknown; its first royal patron was William the Lion, and the person to whom it was indebted next to him in medieval times was Devorgilla. Before the charters and the bridge a humble village --- after them a thriving burgh' (ibid. 48-9).

The earliest surviving documentary reference to Dumfries as a burgh is in a charter of William the Lion (1165-1214), and Devorgilla is credited with having had the first Bridge of Dumfries erected across the Nith and with settling the Greyfriars on the north side of Friars Vennel in the burgh during the thirteenth century. The implications for the development of the town's layout of McDowall's theory would be that there was an existing small settlement at Friars Vennel and that this was incorporated into a newly founded burgh which was built up rapidly to the full extent of the later town. Like Robert Edgar but for more enlightened reasons, William McDowall regarded the medieval layout of the burgh as unitary, from Townhead down to St. Michael's Church in the south. He postulated a small pre-burghal settlement at the northern end next to a castle, and presumably included within the burghal layout as Friars Vennel and the adjacent part of the High Street. Subsequent writers threw doubt on McDowall's conclusions.

### III. James Barbour 1911

When discussing the sixteenth-century developments of the Greyfriars' land on the north side of the street called the Newtown linking Friars Vennel to the Bridge, James Barbour, writing in the transactions of the local archaeological society, remarked that:

'The oldest portion of the burgh must have been further south, viz., near or around St Michael's Church' (Barbour Greyfriars 22).

### IV. R.C.Reid 1915

In the introduction to his extensively annotated edition of Robert Edgar's History, R.C.Reid allowed himself to put forward his own views. He reviewed the evidence for the later royal castle at Castledykes half a mile south of the town having also been the site of a castle at the time of the foundation of the burgh. He accepted this suggestion, previously put forward by George Neilson in 1899, and he concluded by writing that:

'So within easy reach of the protection of the Castle at Castledykes, the wattled booths and wooden huts of the inhabitants of Dumfries, the first beginning of the Burgh, would stand clustered round St. Michael's Church. The township probably did not extend beyond the Millburn, described in the 12th century as the "rivulus de Dumfries". Here stood the Mill, another 12th century landmark. Not till the advent of the Friars is it likely that the Burgh extended north of the Millburn. Round the Convent must have sprung up more houses, though it took some centuries to convert the land between the Millburn and the Convent into a High Street of houses' (Reid Dumfries 8-9).

Both Barbour and Reid place their emphasis on the attractions of the neighbourhood of the parish church of St. Michael. They were probably influenced in this by George Neilson's theory (Neilson Dumfries) that the castles of Dumfries were

always at Castledykes to the south of the town beyond that church. By this view there would not have been any institution to attract settlement at the north end of the town, until after the Greyfriars were settled there in the mid-thirteenth century.

Implicit in this view is also the idea that the proximity of a castle or failing that of a church, was necessary to the coming into being of a settlement in the middle ages. At the time when Barbour and Reid were writing a part of the general stock of popular literary and romantic images was that of a town's 'springing up' under the protective shadow of a lord's castle: this idea lives on today implicit in the rather illogical term 'pre-urban nucleus' when applied to a former medieval institution near an old town. Then as now any such casual relationship needs to be established by historical evidence in each particular case. It seems likely that the initiative in the creation of such a settlement and its design would normally lie with the owner of the land (and castle) and not with the individual settlers attracted to it, and renting pre-determined plots from him.

R.C.Reid's view of the protracted completion of the High Street from the Mill Burn to the Greyfriars convent was based on his reading of the Street-name 'Rottenraw' mentioned in the sixteenth century, which he took to mean a muster-ground, and the reference in a document of 1510 (ibid. 231) to a 'herbare' on the east side of a tenement in the Mid Row at Dumfries (those buildings built over part of the large market place there). On examination it would appear likely that the musters could as conveniently have been held in that part of the urban market place, and that the 'herbare' could have been in fact a walled herb-garden rather than a shrubbery as suggested by Reid, in arguing that this upper part of the town was still undeveloped as late as 1510. In the absence of more detailed evidence an interpretation of the development of half the town could thus be based on two ambiguous references.



An original settlement at the space just north of the Mill Burn was suggested by another writer as part of a cogent argument covering the topography of much of medieval Dumfries.

V. G.W.Shirley 1915

The Burgh Librarian, G.W.Shirley, published in his essay 'The Growth of a Scottish Burgh' what is potentially the most useful account of the evidence for the topography of the medieval town. He presented his interpretations topic by topic and included sketch plans to illustrate his conclusions. Proceeding from a discussion of the fort implied in the name of the town, he suggested that the whole of the High Street area was occupied by this fort, at the time when the civil settlement at Dumfries originated. He wrote that:

See Fig 95k  
26 opp. p. 163.

'The mere fact of the site being a suitable one for a fort was not in itself sufficient to retain a population and establish a permanent township. The district is full of abandoned forts. Some definite advantage secured Dumfries from the desolation that fell upon these .... At this point up the Nith from the Solway were the first readily available fords into Galloway. The genesis of many towns may be found in fords. Travellers, pilgrims and merchants, stayed by flood, sought hospitality in their vicinity..... Smiths, wrights, tailors and inn-keepers found enough work to enable them to remain in the place; weavers, bakers, hewers of wood, and drawers of water gathered round and engaged in humble efforts at husbandry. Their mud and wattle dwellings clustered about the burn on which they afterwards built their mill. It is likely enough that the first ford up the river was at Castledykes, but for the burgh the ford of most importance must have been that which crosses the Nith opposite Nith Street..... In the space at Nith Place one may still see the centre of the primitive village. From this point on the north side of the Millburn the streets radiate south, west, and north-east and north-west ..... the houses would stand well back from the

burn.... That the north bank should be selected ... appears to be natural. The houses were nearer the fort, and protected by the burn. The chief reason, however, may have been that they were nearer the ford over the Nith'. (Shirley Dumfries 9-10).

On the premise he took, that the site of the later burgh was already taken up by the fort, the site proposed at Nith Place would seem to be the best alternative and he termed it 'the Focal Point'. On the question of the church as a rival focus he wrote that:

'It might be argued, here that it is more likely that the village would spring up about the church. That of course, may have been the case; it happened elsewhere, but we conjecture that at Dumfries the village long preceded the church. A church prior to St. Michael's, which seems to have been founded between 1183 and 1188, may have been situated amidst the buildings. Of that we have no evidence but there is, however, sufficient to show that in the 16th century St. Michael's was surrounded by fields' (ibid. 10-11).

It is not clear what period Shirley had in mind for this village next the fort but the soundest point here is that the church was still surrounded by open ground in the sixteenth century. The supposition as to the comparatively late date of the foundation of St. Michael's is based on another of the theories of George Neilson and must be treated with reservations.

It is clear from the evidence of these two passages that with regard to the settlement there before the burgh was founded, Shirley conducted his argument still in terms of a 'primitive village' being set up near to a fort, but due to the individual initiatives of the settlers. He notes that the burgh was mentioned as such in a charter of William the Lion, between 1183 and 1188, and that there was evidence of a new chapel and a royal castle. He touched on the strategic military importance of the town and how William used it to contain

Galloway. He then went on to give his views on how he considered the medieval burgh was created.

'This royal activity, this gathering of men at the Kingly command, meant much to the little village that nestled under the Brae by the Millburn. We can speculate that behind the soldier came the merchant, that the market on the hill to the north of the town --- which had, perhaps, an ancient origin as a border market on neutral ground --- grew in size and consequence; that when burghal status came with its trading privileges and its statutory fairs, the burghers set in the midst of the market place the sign of their Royal privilege -- the Market Cross. Gradually permanent booths and subsequently houses would spring up around the market place. In the wide space from Queensberry Square to the top of Assembly Street (we must eliminate the Midsteeple and the line of houses between South Queensberry Street and High Street, for they came much later) we can trace the market place. Some period of special activity we require for the upspringing and outstretching of the village that took place' (ibid. 16-17).

Shirley attributed the development he suggested here to the seventy years of unbroken peace in the reigns of Alexander II and Alexander III (1214- 1286). He went on to describe the founding of the Greyfriars convent on the brow of the hill to the north of the burgh. He continued:

'It is impossible for us to say how far removed from the buildings of the town the Convent was when it was erected. It is not unlikely that it was some, but not an inconvenient, distance away. What we do know is that the line of its southern boundary is that of the north side of Friar's Vennel, which until 1793 ran up, broken only by a space in front of the New Church, to St. Andrew Street. To Friar's Vennel the houses from our market place gradually grew up in an unbroken line' (ibid. 18).



'None the less the burgh would grow. The houses in the High Street would increase in number and begin to spread along the main exits. Each dwelling in the medieval burgh ordinarily had its yard behind it or beside it..... The houses lay along the west side of the High Street and St. Michael Street, the east side of Queensberry street, and the south side of English Street. The yards extended respectively to Irish Street, the river, Loreburn Street, and Shakespeare Street.... All these streets were originally back entrance lanes, and, as a glance at the plan will show, encircled almost entirely the 16th century burgh' (ibid. 24-5).

'Let us briefly recapitulate. We conjecture that, protected by river and marsh, Dumfries would afford at an early date a refuge and a strength to our primitive ancestors; that as the centuries passed the importance of the Ford in the vicinity confirmed them in the occupancy of the spot and their rude dwellings clustered about the mouth of the burn ...; that the racial struggle between Celt and Norman gave the village, from its strategic position on the borders of Galloway, an impetus which brought its buildings northwards till they surrounded a Market Place. Then the lines of buildings followed the main exits eastwards by English Street and northwards by High Street and Townhead. The building of the Old Bridge in the 15th century added a New Town on the north-west angle and gradually, as the burgh became filled up, back streets and closes came into existence' (ibid. 33-4).

G.W.Shirley had a detailed knowledge of the documentary evidence for the history of the burgh and much of this is given in the text and foot-notes of this article. His interpretation of this information is consistently informed by the tacit assumption that the layout and pattern of the town is the result of a piecemeal additive process spread over centuries. He is at his most original in his suggestion that it

began at Nith Place in a period before that covered by any written evidence, and this conjectural focal point he makes the hub of his argument continued into the period for which evidence is available.

#### VI. G.W.S. Barrow 1971

In the introduction to his edition of the Acts of William I, G.W.S. Barrow puts forward a suggestion as to the origin of the king's burgh at Dumfries which is that:

'The timely death of the lord of Nithsdale (Strathnith), Ralph son of Dunegal ....., enabled the king to seize this strategically important valley as an escheat and to retain for the crown the river-crossing and strong-point of Dumfries, where William evidently founded a castle-burgh settlement as an exact parallel to Nairn about two, and Ayr, about twenty, years later' (RRS ii, 14).

This puts Dumfries into the context of other medieval planned towns, created by the will of the king in strategic positions. The emphasis is on the creation of a burgh at one time, rather than on nebulous 'growth' as the origin of the town layout at Dumfries.

#### VII. Robert Gourlay and Anne Turner 1977

Under the auspices of the Scottish Burgh Survey a report on the archaeological implications of development in Dumfries has been produced. It was intended to provide the background for further urban research and to furnish the local authorities with the necessary historical and archaeological information. In the historical section Anne Turner wrote that:

'Street Layout: Determining the layout and development of the town is especially complicated in the case of Dumfries where a number of natural features --- fords, lochs, burns and hills --- have disappeared. The extraordinarily high number of mottes in the area further confuse the issue.

'G.W.Shirley hypothesized that the primitive settlement initially grew up in the area around Nith Place and spread out in several directions from there. This is possible, but those early settlers would have been far removed from the protection afforded by the Townhead Motte. Perhaps Dumfries, like Glasgow and to a lesser extent Old and New Aberdeen, was to some degree a two-centre site with settlement developing simultaneously at the Townhead and near Nith Place hard by the parish church. Then again, a case can be made that settlement developed near the Townhead Motte and pushed south along the ridge halting near the church. It is a vexed question and not an easy one to answer.

'However Dumfries developed, the market street which formed along the ridge was exceedingly wide'.

(Gourlay and Turner Dumfries 6).

In his section on Archaeological Problems Robert Gourlay wrote that:

'A number of problems, of interest to both the archaeologist and the historian, are immediately apparent. The question, discussed at length above, of whether initial development took place around Townhead motte, or near the parish church is the most pressing archaeological and historical one and more intensive documentary work might assist in its solution..... The street pattern appears to follow essentially that of the medieval period, and this, with the layout of the burgage plots, or 'plan units', suggests a certain degree of deliberate planning of the layout of Dumfries. However the dates at which such units were created is unclear, while later streets may have modified the pattern' (ibid. 15).

The views of the two authors as expressed in these excerpts show what appears to be a basic difference of approach. In the first Anne Turner accepted without critical examination

the tacit assumptions of earlier writers (that medieval towns simply grew up and resulted from individuals' deciding to settle near a castle or church where houses then sprang up). She discussed the possibilities of the settlement being first centred at Townhead or Nith Place (she seems to have missed the distinction which Shirley made between this 'un-nucleated' site and that of the parish church) and weighed the likelihood of there having been two centres simultaneously. As an alternative she suggested that the settlement 'developed' near Townhead 'and pushed south along the ridge halting near the church'. This by now traditional figurative way of describing what was after all the setting out and building by men of a physical artifact --- a town --- both obscures the processes involved and conceals a number of tacit assumptions which are none the less doubtful because they are of long standing.

By contrast Robert Gourlay had a more pragmatic approach. He noted that the street layout and the pattern of burgage plots suggested a certain degree of deliberate planning of the layout of Dumfries. He did not elaborate on the consequences for those previous theories of the town's development, based on an assumption of piecemeal growth, but it is clear that they are untenable in the face of evidence from the town's layout that it has an imposed order which can have come only from planning and not from 'growth'.

Our hypothetical Planning Officer, if faced with the problems of Dumfries, would by this stage be rather bemused by the variety of conflicting assertions about the town's foundation, early centre, and medieval layout and extent. His sources would be:

- |                   |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| I Edgar 1746.     | V Shirley 1915              |
| II McDowall 1873. | VI Barrow 1971              |
| III Barbour 1911  | VII Gourlay and Turner 1977 |
| IV Reid 1915      |                             |

By analysing them for their bearing on particular topics the points of conflict would be made clearer.

On the question of where the initial development took place on the site, the suggestions offered are at Friars Vennel at the north-west corner of the medieval town (II); around St. Michael's Church at the southern extremity of the town (III, IV, and as an alternative in VII); on the north bank of the Mill Burn at Nith Place (V) some way north of the St. Michael's Church; and at the Townhead (as an alternative in VII) at the north-east corner of the town. The word 'village' is used in relation to this initial development in I, II, and V, 'Township' in IV, and 'burgh' is used of it in III, and of its later progress in IV and V.

As to the date or originators of this initial development it is suggested that they were craftsmen and others from the adjacent counties and that Dumfries was a 'Villa' (a town or township) before A.D. 1000 (I): that they were Scoto-Irish settlers from Galloway in the ninth or tenth century (II): and again that they were craftsmen and others gathering to serve travellers at the Nith ford (V).

The character of the buildings in this early settlement is stated to be that of, 'rude cabins' in a 'humble village' (II); 'wattled booths and wooden huts' (IV); and 'mud and wattle dwellings clustered about the burn' in a 'primitive village' (V). The influence of one account on another can be detected in this.

The occasion of the burgh's being formally created (it is recorded as a going concern between 1183 and 1188) is attributed to the warfare of William I with the Galwegians (V); and more particularly to the death of the native lord of the district making it possible for William I to sieze the river-



crossing and strong-point of Dumfries and to found there a castle-burgh settlement like the other planned burghs of the time (VI).

The effects of the granting of burghal status to Dumfries are variously said to have been, the setting up of a Market Cross, the gradual springing up of booths and then houses round the later market place but the 'upspringing and out-stretching of the village' being delayed until 1214-1286 (V); immediate rapid expansion with houses rising everywhere from Townhead to St. Michael's church --- the creation of a unitary layout (II and presumably VI and VII-Gourlay); the unitary character of the town is assumed in (I); extension from the area around St. Michael's Church (III and IV), but no further north than Mill Burn then, and to the vicinity of the Greyfriars at the north of the town only after 'some centuries' (IV); the settlement pushed south from Townhead along the ridge halting near the church (VII-Turner).

Fortresses attracting settlers to their vicinity are said to have stood, at Townhead (II, VII); on the whole of the hill-side later to form the market place (V); and at Castledykes, half-a-mile to the south of the town ( this attracting settlement to the vicinity of St. Michael's parish church at the southern end of the later burgh) (IV).

In the face of this mass of inconsistencies the Planning Officer might well despairingly plot all these suggested alternative historic areas onto a single plan of the town, and call the composite zone so covered his 'Area of Historical Interest'. However to proceed in this way would be both unscientific and impracticable. It would also be quite impossible for him to defend convincingly the inclusion of any of the sites, on this basis, to his Committee. If any progress was to be made it would be necessary for him to discriminate between more and less likely hypotheses, and so between more and less reliable sources.



What appears to be a basic difference of approach and philosophy is apparent among the sources (and within source VII). On the one hand there is the Growth (or 'Topsy') Thesis (implicit in IV, V, probably in III, and in VII-Turner). Sources I and II were written in quite different intellectual climates from that of the 'growth' group and, ~~apart~~ from an assumption that a town must have been preceded by a village, are consistent with a view that the burgh's layout is unitary and was possibly created at one time. On the other extreme are the sources which suggest more forcibly that the burgh's layout is the result of deliberate planning (VI and VII-Gourlay) and that by William I, king of Scots (VI). Put in a simple table this would read for:

<u>Piecemeal growth</u>	<u>Unitary Form</u>	<u>Planned Form</u>
III?	I	VI
IV	II	VII-Gourlay
V		
VII-Turner		

It is to be hoped that the Planning Officer at this stage would not hesitate to apply his own professional training and judgement to the question of whether or not the town's layout appeared to have been planned (which his profession and position might be regarded as making him uniquely qualified to pronounce on) and he would fairly certainly conclude that it was, but there would be good reasons for him to keep his own counsel and seek expert opinions elsewhere, because of the probable implications of the outcome.

Put quite bluntly, the town-plan of a burgh which has been deliberately planned in the medieval period, has inestimable value as an artifact and as an authentic example of medieval town-planning, which, even in the complete absence of surviv-

ing medieval buildings, would make it an area of special historic interest which should properly be designated as a 'Conservation Area' by the local planning authority. If it can be shown that on the contrary the town was somehow the chance result of hundreds of individual developments spread over centuries without any co-ordination, it would lack any interest as a example of town-planning and there would be no point in seeking to preserve it as a whole in face of individual developments. Its integrity (or lack of it) would be confirmed rather than disrupted by a new development which obliterated part of the pattern. In the case of a planned layout, only planned conservation measures are likely to preserve it and these require the designation of a Conservation Area before they can be invoked.

Bearing in mind these difficulties the Planning Officer would no doubt find it expedient to commission an independent study and report on the medieval town-plan at Dumfries. Within the limitations of time and access under which it was pursued, the present study attempts to examine the relevant evidence and to provide a pilot-study which in its methodology may have wider application.

William Mackay Mackenzie in his Rhind Lectures for 1945 was one of the first to place the burghs of Scotland in the context of medieval planned towns (Mackenzie Burghs Ch. IV) and he emphasised that they were the results of creation not growth. In 1957 William Croft Dickinson pointed out that a number of the town plans of ancient burghs were 'eloquent of early "town planning" ' (Aberdeen Burgh Recs. xliii) but all reservations necessary in the use of this seemingly modern term for layouts from the medieval period were destroyed by the exhaustive examination of the subject in Maurice Beresford's New Towns of the Middle Ages (Beresford New Towns) in 1967. This new attitude is taken as being basic to the excellent study of the planning and growth of St Andrews recently published jointly by an historian and a geographer (Brooks & Whittington St. Andrews). This change of emphasis in the ways of thinking about medieval Scottish towns is accepted among urban historians but its basis may still need to be demonstrated to those not normally concerned with these matters.

part one:

# BACKGROUND

## DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

'Dumfries and Galloway' is the name which was chosen for the new Region covering the south-west of Scotland under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The same phrase may also happily introduce the theme of the special relationship of the town and former county of Dumfries to the more remote region of Galloway to the west, which was the beginning of the town's importance in the medieval period, and was the reason for much of its continued prosperity.

The new Region comprises the three former counties of Dumfries, Wigtown, and Kirkcudbright, and the last two make up Galloway. These counties each had taken their names from the royal burghs which had been their chief centres for administration, as also had the county of Ayr which bordered Galloway to the north. The origins of these four particular royal burghs are to a large extent obscure. Not one apart from Ayr, has a surviving royal charter for its erection to the dignity of a burgh of the king, and even the charter of Ayr is dateable, from the careers of its witnesses, only to a period 1203 X 1206 (i.e. to not earlier than 1203 and not later than 1206) (Pryde Burghs 16). G.W.S. Barrow has suggested that it probably dates from 1205 (Ayrshire Coll. 1969, 152: RRS ii 426), but A.A.M. Duncan has argued that a royal charter of circa 1197 X 1203 may also be regarded as pointing to the existence of the burgh of Ayr at that earlier time (Pryde Burghs 17: RRS ii 408-9). However, Ayr does provide the most clearly documented example of the inter-relationship of royal burgh, royal castle and sheriffdom which was usual in the medieval period in Scotland. The building of the castle -- factum est novum opidum inter Don et Ar -- is noted in a monastic annal for AD 1197 (Chron. Melrose (Stevenson), 103),

and a document of circa 1200 is witnessed by William sheriff of Ayr -- Willelmo vicecomite de nouvo castello super Ar (Melrose Liber, No 36: RRS ii 64). The foundation charter from William I (1165-1214) stated that the king had made a burgh at his new castle upon the River Ayr -- me ad novum castellum meum super AR Burgum fecisse. It granted check points on the roads leading into the Ayrshire basin for collecting tolls, which may have been a step towards the later system of trade-precincts associated with the head-burghs of of sheriffdoms: (Dunlop Ayr 13-17: RRS ii 426-8).

In Ayr we have the case of the erection of a royal castle in a newly pacified region, the creation of a sheriffdom based on this strong-point, and the subsequent erection of a king's burgh in the same place, all within a few years around A.D. 1200. This appears to have been one deliberate step in the policy of successive Kings of Scots of extending their personal power into the remoter parts of the kingdom. This policy tended to produce political stability under feudal tenure, better civil order, access to redress from injustice, assimilation to a higher and more complex economy, and above all, increased revenues for the crown.

It is important to note that what William I created at Ayr was a burgh and not a town. The one is a particular medieval institution, implying a privileged legal and economic status granted by a ruler and, in Scotland from the thirteenth century, normally confirmed by charter. The other is purely an advanced social and economic institution, which in Scotland may have had roots much older than those of the burgh. Gordon Donaldson has pointed out that no amount of growth could make a town into a burgh (Donaldson Origins 2). He also suggests that despite the lack of charter evidence burghal status may possibly go back to the time of Malcolm III and Margaret his Saxon queen, that is to 1070-1093 (*ibid.* 5). Ayr was erected into a king's burgh, but by the



same charter the burgesses were also granted five penny-lands belonging to the town of Ayr — ad villam de AR' (RRS ii No 462). This suggests that there was a previous settlement at Ayr, which also provided the best harbour on that coast, at a natural focus of landroutes in the Ayrshire Basin (Dodd Ayr 306-8). Analysis of the medieval layout surviving in the street-pattern and property-boundaries of the central area of the burgh of Ayr has identified what is probably the position of this pre-burghal settlement and points to the existence of a town of Ayr before the whole settlement was recast in the form of a medieval planned burgh circa 1200 (ibid. passim, especially plans opp. 302. 304 and 320).

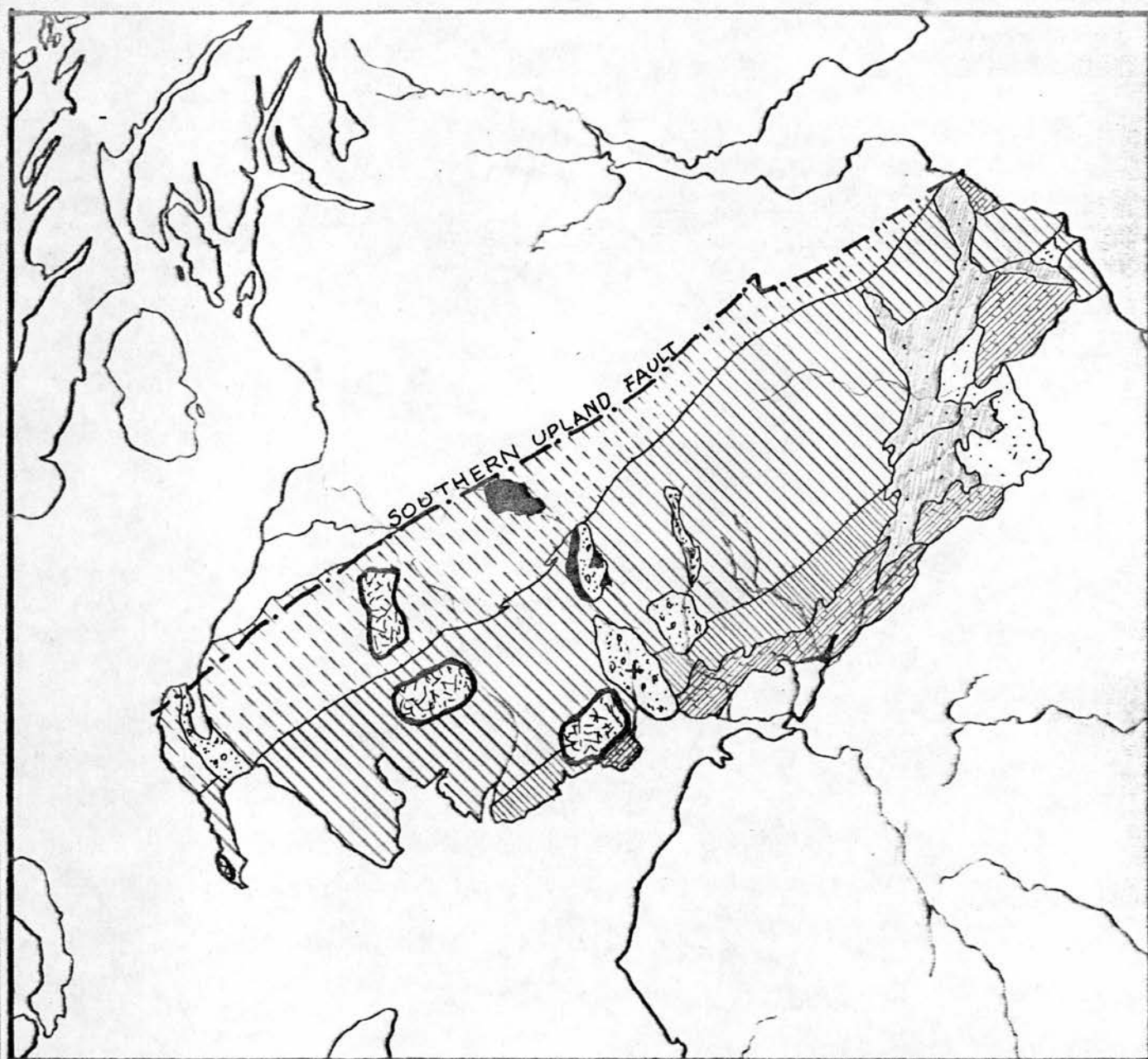
Of the other three early royal burghs in south-west Scotland, the earliest known reference to Wigtown as a burgh is in a document noted in an indenture between the English king Edward I and John Balliol, King of Scots, in 1292 (A.P.S. i, 116), but a sheriff of Wigtown appears in the Rolls of the Scottish Exchequer first in 1265 (E.R. i, 30) and in 1288 he was also the keeper of the king's castle at Kirkcudbright (E.R. i, 39). A king's burgh at Kirkcudbright is first recorded in 1330 (E.R. i, 303). It seems to have taken almost half a century after the royal power was extended into Ayrshire (and when the province of Carrick, previously regarded as part of Galloway, was incorporated as the southern part of the new sherriffdom of Ayr) before that power was extended fully into Galloway. It was even longer before a royal burgh stood beside the royal castle at Kirkcudbright. The slowness of this penetration is a measure of the independent spirit of the native rulers of Galloway reinforced by remoteness and the difficulties of the terrain. The Lordship of Galloway had long been virtually an independent kingdom in the remote south-west of Scotland which the sherriffdom of Ayr had been established to contain from the north. At the time that Ayr was founded the royal power had already been firmly established



# DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

## GEOLOGY

AFTER GEOL. SURVEY PLATE VII



0 miles 50

	Permian		Old Red Sandstone		Ordovician
	Upper Carboniferous		Wenlock Silurian		Lavas
	Lower Carboniferous		Llandovery Silurian		Granite

WAD'78

Fig. 2.

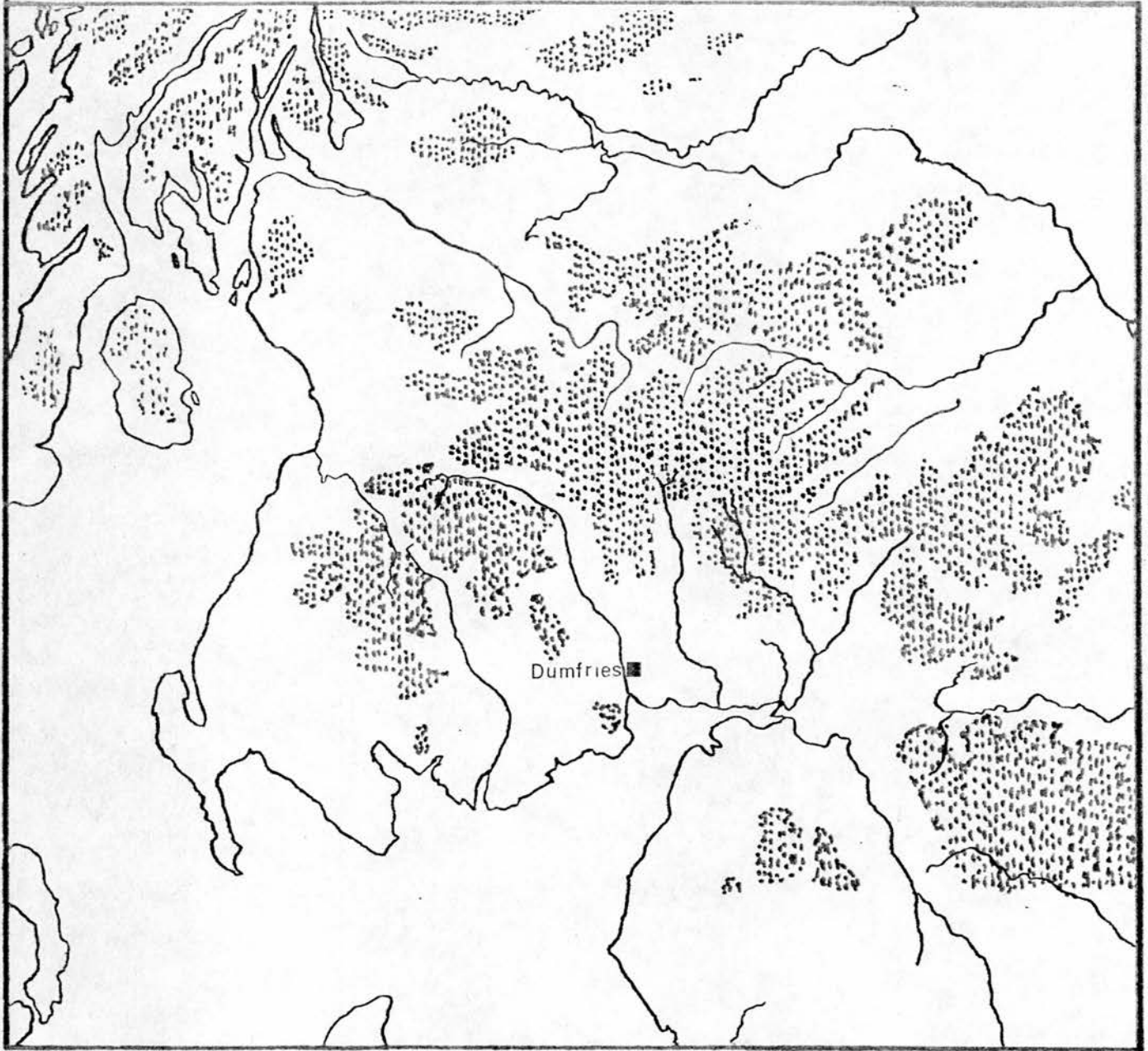
for some time at the royal castle and royal burgh of Dumfries on the River Nith over against the eastern border of Galloway. The first reference to the king's burgh of Dumfries is in a charter of William the Lion granting the church, and a chapel in the burgh of Dumfries, to Kelso Abbey in 1183 X 1188 (RRS ii, No 254).

The purpose of these preliminary remarks has been to introduce the theme of Dumfries and Galloway and at the same time to indicate the fragmentary and oblique nature of the written evidence for the foundation of Scottish burghs and the necessary caution with which any deductions from this evidence must be made. Before studying the burgh of Dumfries in greater detail and in particular finding what may be deduced about its early history from an analysis of the physical layout of its town-plan, it is first necessary to establish the nature of its geographical and political background,<sup>and</sup> the historical evidence available, including any material evidence which survives.

#### Geology and Scenery

Dumfries and Galloway form the western portion of the Southern Uplands, a massif of ancient Palaeozoic rocks having the north-east to south-west trend characteristic of rocks folded in the Caledonian orogeny. They are highest along the northern margin, where the Southern Uplands Fault defines the edge of the down-faulted newer rocks of the broad midland trough of Scotland. The Southern Uplands run across Scotland from next the east coast near Dunbar, south-westward to jut out into the Irish Sea as the blunt peninsula of Galloway, with the Solway Firth lying to its south. In this western part the bleak high moorland falls away southward gradually in broad steps. An intermediate plateau sloping down from around a thousand feet to about four or five hundred feet, forms a

# DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY RELIEF



0 miles 50

LAND OVER 800 FEET



WAD'78

Fig. 3.

transitional zone between upland rough grazing and the wider cultivated lowlands beside the Solway.

The Palaeozoic rock platform of the area was probably once covered by rather younger Mesozoic and Tertiary deposits but these have generally been removed by erosion. They survive only in certain hollows in the underlying older rock, which run northwards into the Uplands. Permian deposits occupy the depression in Annandale. In Nithsdale a major depression runs northward across the Southern Uplands from the Solway almost to the boundary fault, with a branch extending to form the Sanquhar basin. The deposits are now confined to four separate basins along the Nithsdale hollow, viz. at Dumfries, Thornhill, Sanquhar, and the valley of the Snar. The first and the last of these basins are occupied solely by Permian rocks, while the Thornhill and Sanquhar basins have in addition Lower and Upper Carboniferous deposits which have been mined for coal.

The southward trend of the rivers draining to the Solway was probably established before the Mesozoic and Tertiary deposits had been worn away. From east to west the principal rivers in Dumfriesshire are the Esk, the Annan, and the Nith. In Galloway, which begins at the west bank of the Nith, are the Dee, the Fleet, the Cree and the Luce. The River Nith is the longest of all and its valley provides the only through-route practicable, leading northward to the Ayrshire Plain. This is because it rises to the north of the boundary-fault and then flows southwards through the Sanquhar, Thornhill and Dumfries basins before reaching the Solway.

The River Nith is the boundary between two distinct landscape regions on either side. North-east of the river, the hills of the Southern Uplands, almost as far as the East Coast, rise from the high plateau surface as smooth, rounded eminences with convex slopes covered by grass or heather. This is the



true Borders region, and its rather monotonous green undulation contrasts markedly with the character of the Galloway region to the south-west of the Nith. There, large intrusions of granite lend a 'wild and rugged grandeur' to the landscape (Geol. Survey, 1). These uplands are more dissected. Harsh glacial ~~er~~osion has scoured out U-shaped valleys and has roughened the landscape of upland and lowland alike, so that it greatly resembles the topography of the Western Highlands. In Galloway bare rock and peaty hollows restrict the usefulness of the intermediate plateau for cultivation, and even on the lowlands there are areas of glacial hillocks alternating with stripped rock.

The regional contrast is also reflected in the upland vegetation. The drier and better-drained Border moorlands have the extensive areas of heather and grass which became the sheep-walks producing the wool on which the early mercantile prosperity of Scotland was based. They were organised by the great Cistercian houses founded along the edge of the upland by the Scottish kings. In Galloway, where there is a higher rainfall and a milder, more maritime climate, peaty soils and wet moorland vegetation predominate. The peat deposits of Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire are exceeded in Scotland only by those of Sutherland and Caithness (Tivy South of Scot., 480). Here the medieval monasteries were sited along the coastal lowlands and encouraged the rearing of black cattle, which activity remained of considerable economic importance right up to the 18th century.

The intermediate plateau, dip-slope of the Southern Uplands, is much dissected by its southward-flowing rivers, and provides an irregular boundary to the drift-covered coastal lowland. In Galloway this lowland is quite extensive in Wigtownshire where it is terminated by low sea-cliffs. The coastal lowlands are more fragmented in Kirkcudbrightshire, where they are interrupted by intrusive granite masses such as that of Griffel (1,868 ft.:573m.) which looms over the western

side of the mouth of the Nith. This far the coastline is one of rocky headlands separating stretches of mud-flats formed around tidal estuaries. East of the Nith begins the rich carse-fringed lowland of Dumfriesshire underlain by hollows in the Triassic and Permian sandstones, which strata continue under the Solway Firth and are found again in the Eden Valley. The Scottish shore is mantled here by a deep tract of marshes which reveal at low tide extensive mudflats interrupted by sinuous channels and the circuitous outfalls of the main rivers. Inland there is a post-glacial shoreline at some 25ft (7.6m) above Ordnance Datum recording a period of some centuries when the post-glacial rise in sea-level temporarily outpaced the rise of the landmass by isostatic adjustment when the ice-caps over western Scotland had melted. The clay and sand deposits from this marine transgression in places extend miles inland and may overlies the stumps of earlier post-glacial trees. The raised beaches have made coastal settlement difficult and have produced miles of low-lying coastal marsh (Whitlow Geol. Scot., 51-2).

The Lochar Moss is the most extensive of these coastal marshes and extends inland as a wide peat-bog for over six miles in a broad hollow parallel with the River Nith and a little to the east of the town of Dumfries. It is up to two miles wide and it has for centuries presented a considerable barrier to east-west communications by land. Estuarine marshes and the Lochar Moss meant that in early medieval times Dumfries could be approached by road only from the north-east. However the Solway depended more on coastwise transport in the past, and the Nith and Annan are tidal rivers with a depth of water which was sufficient still to bring vessels of comparatively large tonnage to near Dumfries and to Annan in the early years of this century (Hewison Dumfriesshire 6: Graham & Truckell Solway Harbours 109).



### Communications

Cutting into the north-east to south-west barrier of the Southern Uplands the main river valleys have generally prevented easy east-west movement but they have always channelled communication between England and central Scotland along a few routes. The routes giving the easiest or the most direct route to Edinburgh and the Forth-crossing at Stirling were originally the most important. The modern growth of Glasgow has now led to western routes becoming the most used.

The easiest route into eastern Scotland is that along the narrow eastern coastal strip guarded by Berwick and Dunbar and still used as a principal road and rail route to Edinburgh. A more direct but difficult route to Edinburgh follows the convenient north-south alignment of Redesdale, the Jed valley and Lauderdale. The historic invasion-route into Scotland west of the Pennines had to pass around the head of the Solway estuary via Carlisle, and crossed the Rivers Sark and Esk into Scotland, or cut across the Solway Sands at low tide. From there the most direct route ran westward and then north up the Annan Valley and over the watershed to follow the Clyde Valley down to Glasgow, or to go eastward via the Biggar Gap to Edinburgh and the Forth. This route to Glasgow now carries three-quarters of the road traffic to and from England. The western route used by the Romans similarly ran up Annandale and went northward, via the fort at 'Castle-dykes' on the Clyde.

Further to the west, only the through-trench of the Nith valley provides a convenient route northward to central Scotland. This however leads first into the Ayrshire basin and any route beyond must climb through the surrounding high moorlands before it approaches Glasgow. The Romans, in their first occupation of Scotland (A.D. 80-110) established forts at Dalswinton on the Nith, Glenlochar on the Dee, and Gatehouse on the Fleet, which could close-up the exits from the uplands and controlled the coastal lowlands lying to the

west of their main route up the Annan Valley. In the second Roman occupation however, a parallel branch-route was established running north through Upper Nithsdale following the left bank of the Nith before swinging eastward to join the main road running north from Annandale at Crawford. The Roman fort at Dalswinton was replaced by one at Carzield lower down the River Nith but still to the north of the future site of Dumfries. The cross route from Annandale swung northward to keep to the high ground above the Luchar Burn before reaching Carzield. This route beside the Nith may possibly have been continued southward along the moraine between the River Nith and the Lochar Moss, and past the site of Dumfries, to a Roman fort at Ward Law near the mouth of the river (O.S. Roman Brit.; Scott S-W Scot., Figs 36 and 40). At a period when movement was predominantly north-south across the Southern Uplands, the Nith-Valley route was of minor value and the site of Dumfries was apparently neglected. It was only when in the medieval period the relative independence of Galloway from the rest of Scotland began to be a matter of more immediate concern to the Scottish crown, that the site of Dumfries assumed a considerable strategic importance, as a nodal point controlling the main routes into and out of that peninsular region, in the vicinity of the lowest fords across the Nith.

See Fig. 8  
opp. p. 41.

#### Political Geography

As Joy Tivy has suggested in a perceptive essay on the area that, 'The Borders is of the east, Galloway of the west, of Scotland' (Tivy South of Scot. 478). This is also true in cultural and political matters. The name 'The Borders' speaks of trade and armies and men with their eyes fixed on regions much further north or south than the Southern Uplands. Even those who lived in the region were perforce involved with eastern Scotland which in medieval times was the richer part of the kingdom. From the east coast also the staple trade with the continent was conducted, in the early period mainly

through the port of Berwick-upon-Tweed. That this town, once Scottish, has within the circuit of its Elizabethan walls an area much smaller than was contained by its medieval defences, and that the important medieval burgh of Roxburgh no longer exists, indicates to what extent a formerly prosperous region has had its early promise stunted by centuries of recurrent warfare and border raids. Place-names and family names in the Borders indicate a thorough going Anglicization at an early period.

By contrast with the Borders, grey Galloway is a relatively inaccessible and introverted region, for long a separate political entity exerting its influence over neighbouring areas. Nithsdale and Annandale are transitional in character, in earlier times associated with Galloway but later sharing more the life of the rest of the Borders. Traditionally Galloway proper begins at the 'Brig end o' Dumfries', and this large blunt peninsula beyond the Nith looks westward and lies remote from the strategic routeways between England and Scotland, and escaped to a large extent the cyclical prosperity and desolation which such a position could bring. Shielded on its north and much of its east sides by high land and moors, it long lay effectively isolated from cultural contacts with the rest of Scotland, but open to seafarers using the western seaways. The tidal inlets of its extended coastline encouraged early settlers and in particular cultural contacts with Antrim across the North Channel and with the peoples of the Hebrides. Until roads in the peninsula began to be improved in the eighteenth century, communications were largely coast-wise and most of the chief settlements were also seaports.

In the vicinity of Kirkcudbright was the seat of the Lords of Galloway and the etymology of this place-name aptly brings in the various linguistic influences in Galloway. 'Kirkcudbright' means 'St. Cuthbert's church'. Recorded variant forms are Kircuthbright (1296), Kirkcudbrich (1325), and Kirkcudbrith (1495). In this compound, the word-order is Gaelic, and the

first element shows the substitution of Norse kirkja 'church' for Gaelic cill. In addition to this Gaelic word-order and Norse first element, the compound also contains the name of an Anglian saint, as its second element (Nicolaisen Town Names 119-20). It has been suggested that the name appears to have been coined in a bilingual situation where Norse and Gaelic speakers lived side by side in a region with an ecclesiastical adherence to Northumbria, rather than to the rest of Scotland. These circumstances reflect the varied early political history of the region as far as it can be ascertained.

In the fifth and sixth centuries Dumfries and Galloway appear to have formed the main part of the native British kingdom of Rheged, which possibly had had a sub-Roman Christian diocese based on Carlisle and seemingly another at Whithorn for the area of Galloway beyond the Nith (Thomas Britain and Ireland 82). The evidence of place-names and archaeology suggests early Irish colonization of the far west of Galloway by Dalriadic scots, possibly from the sixth century (*ibid.* 56-7). The strongly Gaelic character of medieval Galloway however suggests a continued migration from Ireland. In the seventh century Galloway passed under the overlordship of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria, the power of which was further extended into Kyle in central Ayrshire in the mid-eighth century. Bede records the tradition of Ninian in the fifth century, establishing the first church in Scotland known as Candida Casa the 'white house' which is literally translated as h wit aern or Whithorn. This became the centre of an Anglian bishopric, for long owing allegiance to York. Probably in the same eighth century ecclesiastical reorganization the minster churches were established at Kirkcudbright and at Hoddum in Annandale. The paucity of Anglian place-names however suggests that there was actually no large settlement of Anglian peoples in Galloway at the time. In fact Gaelic seems to have been replacing British speech, and in the late ninth and tenth centuries associated with the Hiberno-Norse kingdoms



at Dublin and York, there was added the element of Viking settlement in Cumberland and Dumfriesshire which also seems to have involved a large element of Gaelic speaking Hebridean free-booters. These, the Gall-Ghaidhil or 'foreign Gael' reinforced the Gaelic character of south-west Scotland which became known as 'i n Gall Gaidhealaibh', 'among the foreign Gael' which was later Anglicised to 'Galloway' (Watson Celtic Place-Names, 100: Duncan Making of the Kingdom 87-9). A.A.M. Duncan has suggested (ibid. 89) that the circumstance of the lack of Norse place-names in the counties of Wigtown and Kirkcudbright in contrast with their presence in Dumfriesshire, may well be explained by the whole region being formerly under the political control of the chief or king of the Gall-Ghaidhil and that that dynasty became the ruling family of Galloway giving their name to the then wider province, which included all of Scotland south and east of Clydesdale and Teviotdale. By the twelfth century the lordship of Galloway was already restricted to Wigtown and Kirkcudbright (RRS i 38).

#### Nithsdale

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the political geography of the realm of Scotland reflected geographical divisions reinforced by cultural differences. All north of the River Forth was Scotia or Scotland proper, a Gaelic speaking region peopled by a mixture of the Picts and the Scots. This was the base of the power of the kings of Scots. South of the Forth and fringing the east coast was Lothian representing the northern part of the former Anglian kingdom of Northumbria annexed by the king of Scots about 1016 and settled by Gaelic speaking peoples subsequently, although retaining a substantial Germanic speaking population. Berwick on Tweed, and Roxburgh further up the Tweed Valley, are in this region and were the earliest Scottish burghs to be recorded (ESC No35).

Cumbria covered most of Scotland south of the Forth, and west of Lothian. It represented the old British kingdom of Strathclyde, which had stretched from around Dumbarton in the north to the English Lake District as far south as the Rere Cross on Stainmore. The border with England was seized by William Rufus in 1092 effectively cutting off the area to the south, but Cumbria continued as a distinct political entity with its own bishopric at Glasgow. Between 1135 and 1157 the kings of Scots reasserted their control south of the Solway. The population of Strathclyde was a mixture of Briton, Anglian, Scandinavian and Gael. It was part of the kingdom of the Scots, but was a province frequently considered by the kings of Scots to be useful for their successors to gain experience in, acting as virtually independent rulers. It was in a charter of David I granted when he was still Earl David (1119 X 1124) that the existence of Scottish burghs is first recorded (ibid.: Pryde Burghs 3).

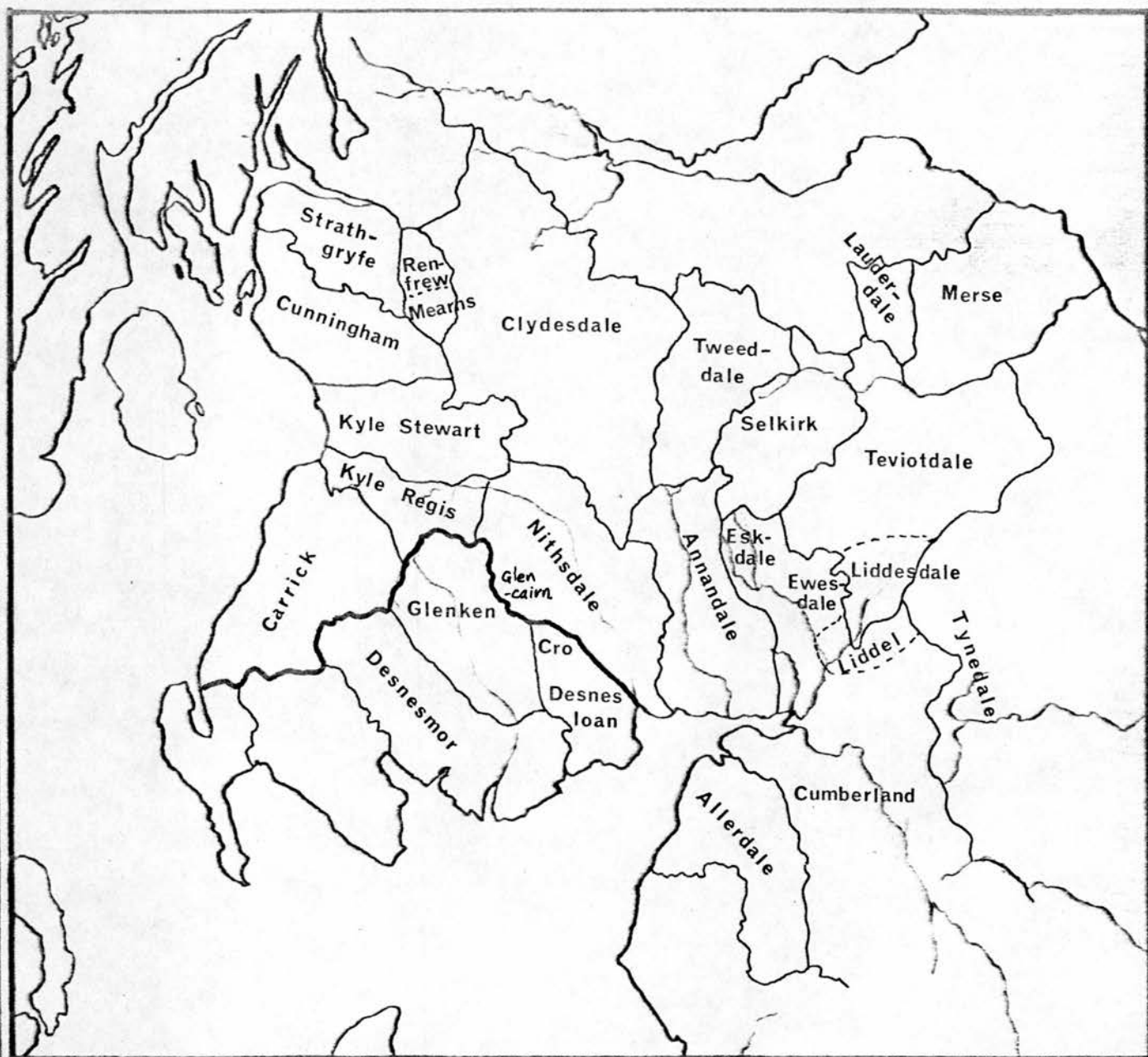
Westward of Cumbria lay the peninsular highlands of Galloway cut off from the rest of Scotland by marshes and uplands but accessible by sea from Ireland and the Hebrides. This Gaelic speaking ~~enclosure~~<sup>area</sup> emerged as a fiercely independent region the rulers of which for long resisted the efforts of the kings of Scots to unify their kingdom.

Before his accession in 1124 David I was lord of Cumbria, but subsequently the effective power in the south-west passed to a Norse-Celtic overlord of Galloway, Fergus king of the Galwegians, lord of Galloway. David received military aid and probably annual tribute from the lord of Galloway but seems not to have attempted to set up sheriffsdoms or royal castles in this remote region. However in 1135 David I extended his power over Cumberland across the Solway, and Duncan suggests that his influence and authority in Galloway were then strong as evidenced by the grant of a barony to Hugh de Moreville and the foundation of Dundrennan Abbey by David I, both in the vicinity of Kirkcudbright, the chief



# DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY SECULAR DIVISIONS 12th C.

AFTER BARROW *CUMBRIA* FIG. 4



0 miles 50

WAD'78

Fig. 4.

residence of the lords of Galloway (Duncan Making of the Kingdom, 164). When his successor Malcolm IV (1153-1165) lost Cumberland in 1157, there was a Scottish revolt, and Fergus and certain earls besieged the king at Perth in 1160. Malcolm then took the offensive and extended his power over Galloway in three invasions. He suppressed the royalty of Galloway in 1160-61 (Barrow Cumbria 128). Fergus entered religion becoming a canon of Holyrood Abbey at Edinburgh and died in 1161. Galloway was divided to be ruled by his sons Uhtred and Gilbert, nominally under the kings of Scots. The territory of Nithsdale bordering Galloway on the east continued to be ruled by its native lords, Dunegal and then by his sons. Annandale the neighbouring territory eastwards was however firmly held by feudal tenure of military service to the king of Scots, and had been since David had granted it to Robert de Brus about 1124 (ESC No 54).

At the accession of William I (William the Lion) in 1165 Radulf son of Dunegal was the lord of lower Nithsdale with Dumfries and Caerlaverock, and his brother Duvenald's issue held upper Nithsdale. Galloway was similarly divided with Uhtred son of Fergus holding the territory from the River Nith westward to the River Fleet where the territory of his brother Gilbert probably began. Partition of an inheritance was quite customary in Galloway.

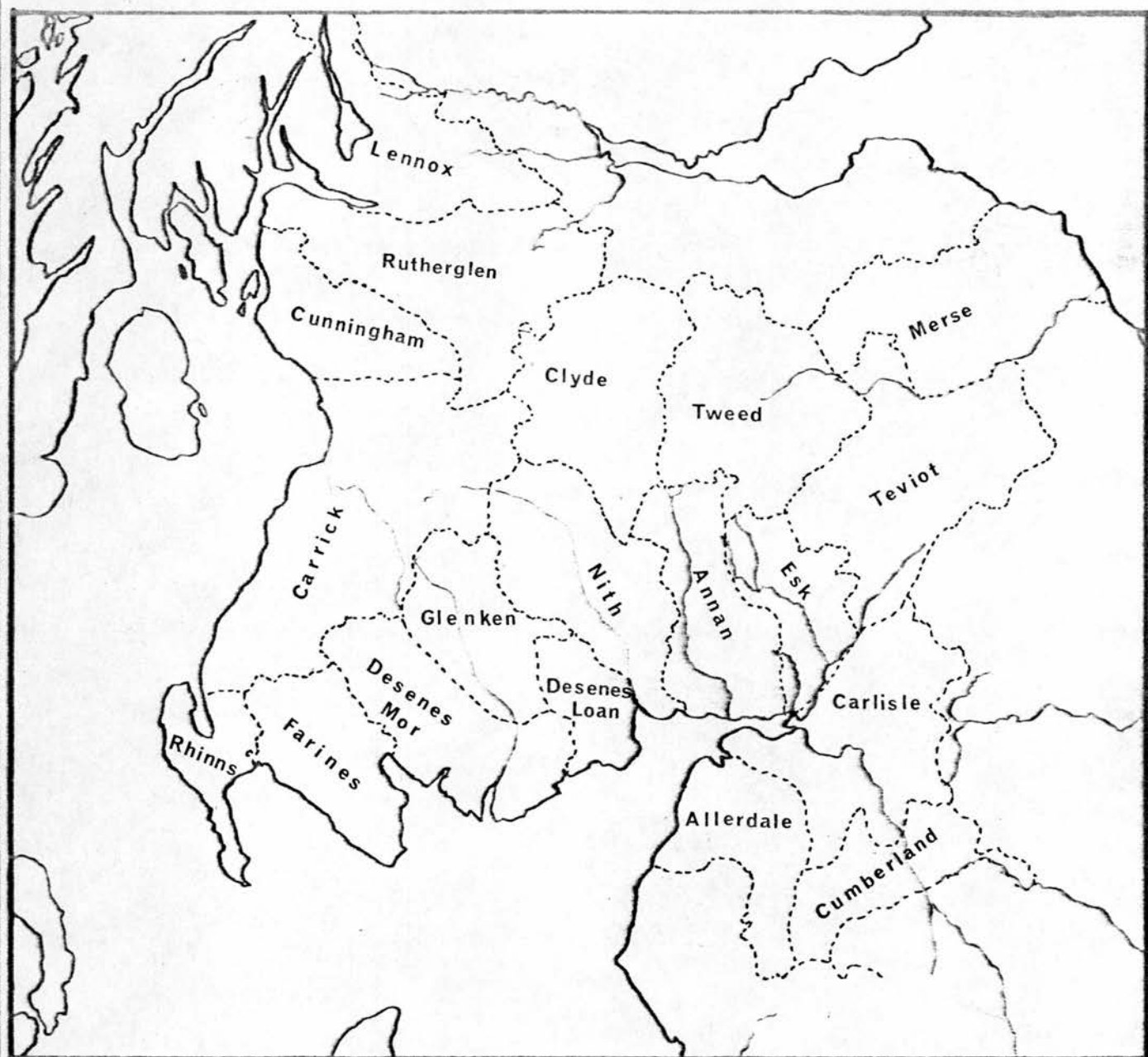
The fact that Nithsdale was a traditional unit of landholding with natural boundaries and recognised limits, and was not merely a border zone defined in relation to its western frontier with Galloway, is shown by the Brus charter which defined Annandale as marching with the land of Dunegal lord of Strathnith on the west, i.e. along the eastern boundary of Nithsdale. The territorial integrity of Nithsdale seems to be assumed in the way that a later charter of 1161 X 1164 is addressed to 'Radulf son of Dunegal and Duvenald his brother' (RRS i No 230) as if their joint holding was the Nithsdale their father Dunegal had held.

# DUMFRIES

AND GALLOWAY

## DEANERIES 12th & 13th C.

AFTER BARROW *CUMBRIA* FIG. 5



0 miles 50

WAD'78

Fig. 5.

It is relevant that in contrast to the normally dispersed and fragmented nature of the geography of feudal holdings in Southern Scotland, the pattern in much of the south-west is one of large and compact feudal lordships. G.W.S. Barrow explains this by demonstrating the likelihood that before feudal settlement, this region already had a simple pattern of well-established geographical and administrative districts defined by natural boundaries. (Barrow Cumbria passim). Nithsdale is one such. He points out that when the new feudal lordships eventually covered the south-west they fitted remarkably neatly this pattern of long-established secular divisions, and that the new lords often inherited special powers and responsibilities in the social and legal organisation of their districts. From references in documents of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Barrow reconstructed the pattern of ancient secular or civil divisions shown in Fig.

4 . There is also a close conformity with the earliest recorded ecclesiastical divisions, the deaneries (Fig. 5 ). This suggests that in the twelfth century there was some close relationship, 'either of imitation or of independent derivation from a common source' (ibid. 127). This would clearly have been convenient and it is tempting to suggest that it may have been a matter of church policy, that when ecclesiastical territorial divisions were first being formalised they should be made to correspond to the existing pattern of secular administrative divisions.

On the map of the twelfth century secular divisions (Fig. 4 ) a heavy line marks the normal limits of Galloway, and it will be seen that the three districts bordering the Solway to the east, corresponding to the later county of Dumfries, are Nithsdale (Strathnith), Annandale (Strathannan), and Eskdale. These are matched by the twelfth and thirteenth-century Deaneries of Nith, Annan and Esk (Fig. 5 ).

In the earlier twelfth century the area known as Galloway was somewhat elastic. In its widest sense it included all

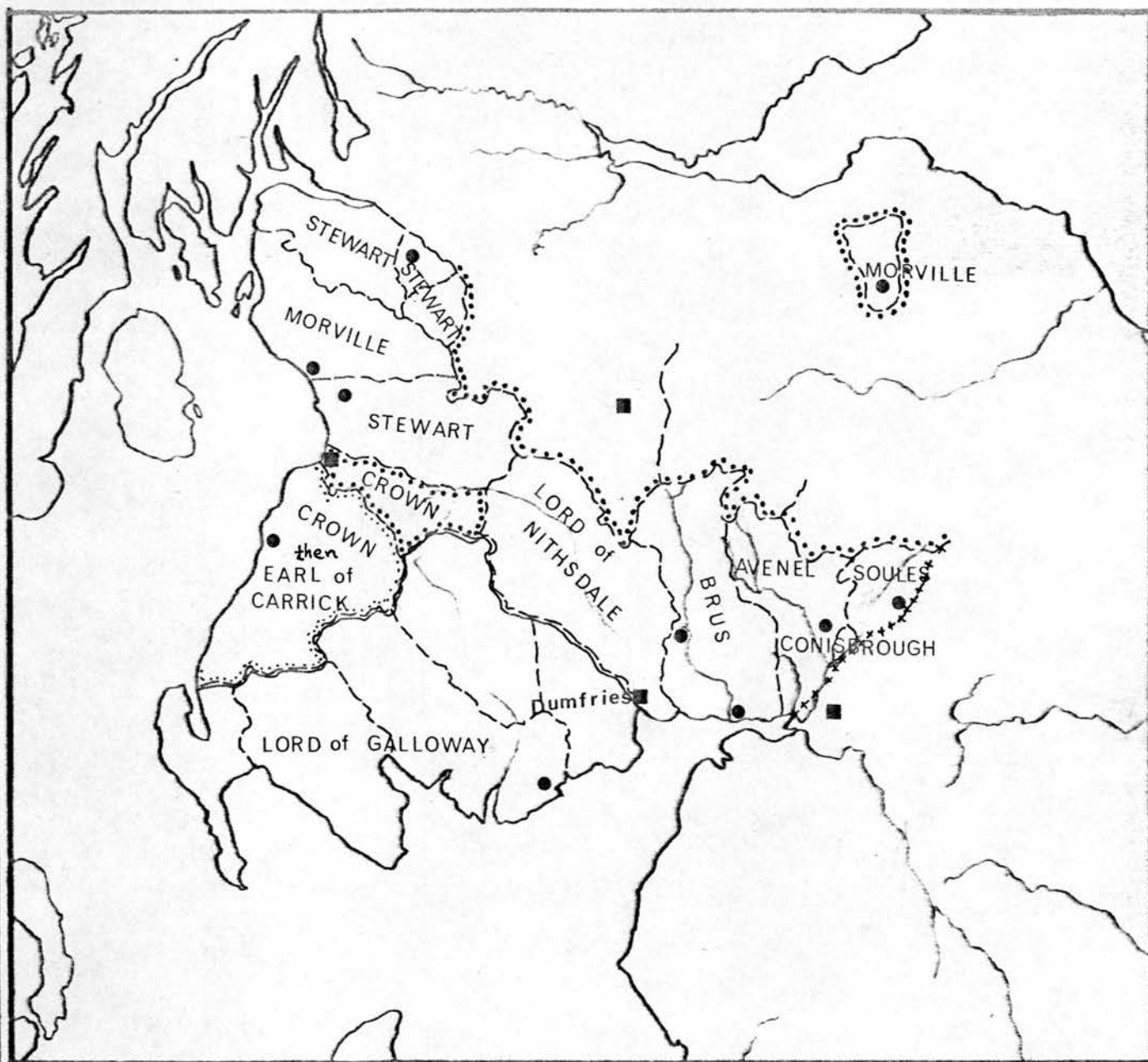


# DUMFRIES

AND GALLOWAY

## FEUDAL SETTLEMENT 12th C.

AFTER BARROW CUMBRIA FIG. 6



0 miles 50

■ ROYAL CASTLE

● LORDS' CASTLE

WAD'78

Fig. 6.



the south of Scotland west of Teviotdale and south of Clydesdale, but neither the lordship nor the bishopric of Galloway covered so large an area. Carrick was not in fact controlled by Fergus of Galloway, and to the east Dunegal, lord of Strathnith or Nithsdale, and later his sons, principally Radulf and Duvenald, ruled independently of Fergus and his dynasty. Moreover the Deaneries of Carrick and Nith were parts of the diocese of Glasgow, not of that of Whithorn. 'Already, therefore, in the twelfth century the lordship and bishopric of Galloway were restricted to the limits of the modern county of Wigtown and Stewartry of Kirkcudbright' (RRS i, 38). Galloway, Carrick and much of Upper Nithsdale remained unfeudalised during the twelfth century but in the districts further to the north and east it was otherwise, from Liddesdale and Eskdale around to Kyle and Cunningham. These districts were granted out by the Scottish crown as compact feudal holdings. The pattern of these in the twelfth century is shown in Fig. 6. There are few charters of infeftment before the 1160's but the pattern of royal grants is fairly clear.

In most of these compact feudal lordships, and probably in all of them, the new lords built themselves the typical earthwork-castles called mottes (Barrow Cumbria, 130-2). It seems likely that this type of fortification may have been provided for the Lords of Nithsdale, who were friendly to the crown, to guard the strategic fords into Galloway in the vicinity of Dumfries.

It must be emphasised that this pattern of early feudal settlement in the twelfth century was made possible only by the extension westward of the power of the kings of Scots. It is an interesting comment on the separate development of society in the south-west that the establishment of this geography of feudal holdings was conditioned and facilitated by the existing system of traditional administrative, fiscal

and ecclesiastical provinces. With the extension of royal power to the banks of the Nith, at the eastern door to Galloway, the strategic position of Dumfries was recognised by the erection there of the chief royal castle and only king's burgh south of Lanark. See Fig. 13 opp. p. 114.

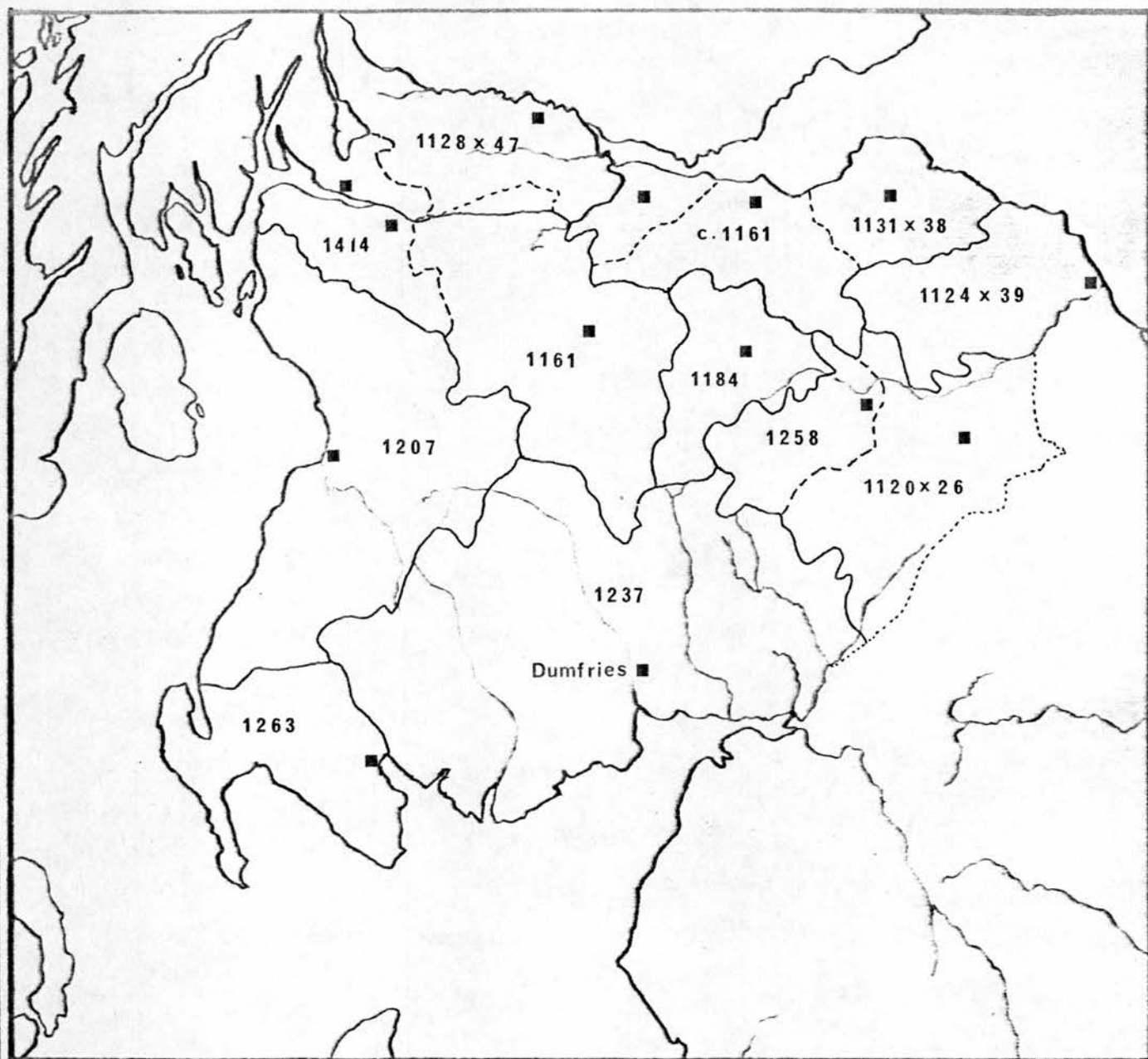
Down to the 1160's all of Nithsdale was ruled by its native lords, but after the death of Radulf, son of Dunegal, in or after 1165 William I King of Scots seems to have taken lower Nithsdale into his own hand, including the area of Dumfries, and subsequently he established the royal castle and king's burgh. He seems to have granted out some small fiefs in Nithsdale as evidenced by the numerous mottes surviving, but for some time the old ruling family as represented by Duvenald son of Dunegal and his successors, continued to hold Upper Nithsdale and Glencairn. Dumfries itself probably had been a border settlement in the period before it was taken over by William I and erected into a king's burgh, but this role would be intensified when the direct power of the King of Scots moved forward to the Nith, to face the territory of the native princes of Galloway across the river. It was not until 1235 at the earliest that the normal forms of feudal settlement could be said to have been extended generally to Galloway (*ibid*, 129), and Dumfries was a base for royal control for almost a century up to that time.

#### The Sherifffdom

From being a royal border strength on the edge of a wild and potentially hostile region, Dumfries is next found as the seat of the sheriff of Dumfries at the centre of a wide sherifffdom which included Eskdale, Annandale, Nithsdale and apparently the whole of Galloway. The late Professor Dickinson suggested (*Fife Ct. Book* 391) that the sherifffdom may have been created by William I (who reigned 1165-1214). This would fit in with the pattern of castle-burgh-sheriff-sherifffdom as associated developments in the policy of extending

# DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY EARLY SHERIFFDOMS

AFTER HIST. ATLAS SCOT. MAP 23



WAD'78

Fig. 7.

the direct rule of the Scottish royal house, discussed previously, but up to 1235 the sheriff can have had only nominal control over Galloway. Dumfries would also have been on the extreme western edge of this territory over which he did have effective control (Annandale had been granted to the Brus family with powers only a little less than royal (ESC 48-9: RRS ii, 178-9) so that the sheriff's jurisdiction would have been effectively excluded from Annandale as well). In 1237 a sheriff of Dumfries is recorded for the first time (Melrose Liber No.206) and Dickinson notes (Fife Ct. Bk., 361n) that in 1246 the sheriff of Dumfries 'seems to have held a watching brief over Galloway' referring to Holyrood Liber No 74. Some time after the king's writ began to run generally in Galloway it seems to have been considered expedient to erect a sheriffdom based on Wigtown in the furthest south-west. When the sheriff of Wigtown rendered account at Exchequer in 1265 he was allowed five marks for his defensive works at the royal castle when, presumably as Sheriff, he had hastily prepared against the Norwegian invasion threatened by Hacon in 1263 (ER i, 30-1: Fife Ct. Bk., 362). As mentioned already, the sheriff of Wigtown was also recorded as the keeper of the royal castle at Kirkcudbright in 1288 (ER i, 39), and a royal burgh is first recorded there in 1330 (*ibid.* 303). However Kirkcudbright never became a sheriffdom in its own right (Fife Ct. Bk., 366). In 1369 it was erected into a 'stewartry' when the district was granted to the Douglasses by David II and they put in a steward to administer the lands (Dickinson and Duncan Scotland to 1603, 96). This new arrangement must have drastically curtailed the extent of the jurisdiction of the sheriff of Dumfries in the territory west of the Nith, and after more than a century of being the head-burgh at the caput and geographical centre of a very extensive sheriffdom, Dumfries must have in practice reverted to being the seat of a sheriff who was mainly concerned with administering the territory lying to the east which was to become the later county of Dumfriesshire. The prime strategic

military importance of Dumfries vis-a-vis Galloway was by the fourteenth century becoming a thing of the past. Edward I, that hammer of the Scots, had marched over Dumfriesshire and Galloway alike, and had demonstrated that their regional differences were of less immediate moment when faced with repeated invasions by a foreign power having a forward base at Carlisle. The 'golden age' of the Canmore kings had ended with the death of Alexander III in 1286 and the subsequent War of Independence. Thereafter it was the uncomfortable proximity of the border with England which was to grow more important to the people of Dumfries, and the town became a headquarters for the Maxwells, frequently Wardens of the West March (Rae Scottish Frontier 26). It is in the earlier period with which this study is chiefly concerned that the effects of successive political changes on the strategic value of the site of the town of Dumfries in relation to Galloway, seem to have brought the town into being and to have given it a momentum which ensured its continuing success.



### THE SETTING OF DUMFRIES

Dumfries stands at the centre of the largest of the basins of younger rocks which largely determine the course of the River Nith. The hollow in the Silurian country-rock is filled by New Red Sandstone of Permian age. This dune-bedded freestone has provided the warm red masonry found in the older buildings in the area and as far north as Glasgow in the Central Lowlands. It was mainly worked from the Quarries at Locharbriggs a few miles N-E of Dumfries, and earlier at the town's quarries at Castledykes south of the town.

The relative softness of this younger rock has meant that the basin is represented by an extensive lowland or hollow, surrounded by hill-masses of the older rock, except where the Nith has cut a narrow valley from the Thornhill Basin to the North, and where the Dumfries Basin dips under the waters of the Solway Firth to the South. The intrusive granite mass of Criffell (1,868') reinforces the edge of the basin in the S-W, on the Galloway side of the Nith Estuary.

The varied topography of the floor of the basin is due less to the action of the river on the Permian sandstone than to extensive and varied superficial deposits. These are the results of ice planing and the stages of fluctuating glacial retreats, followed by marine incursions leaving marine clays and sand deposits and raised-beach features far inland, and more recent peat-mosses, estuarine deposits and coastal marshes made up of fine-grained marine sands. Only in relatively modern times has the work of man had much effect

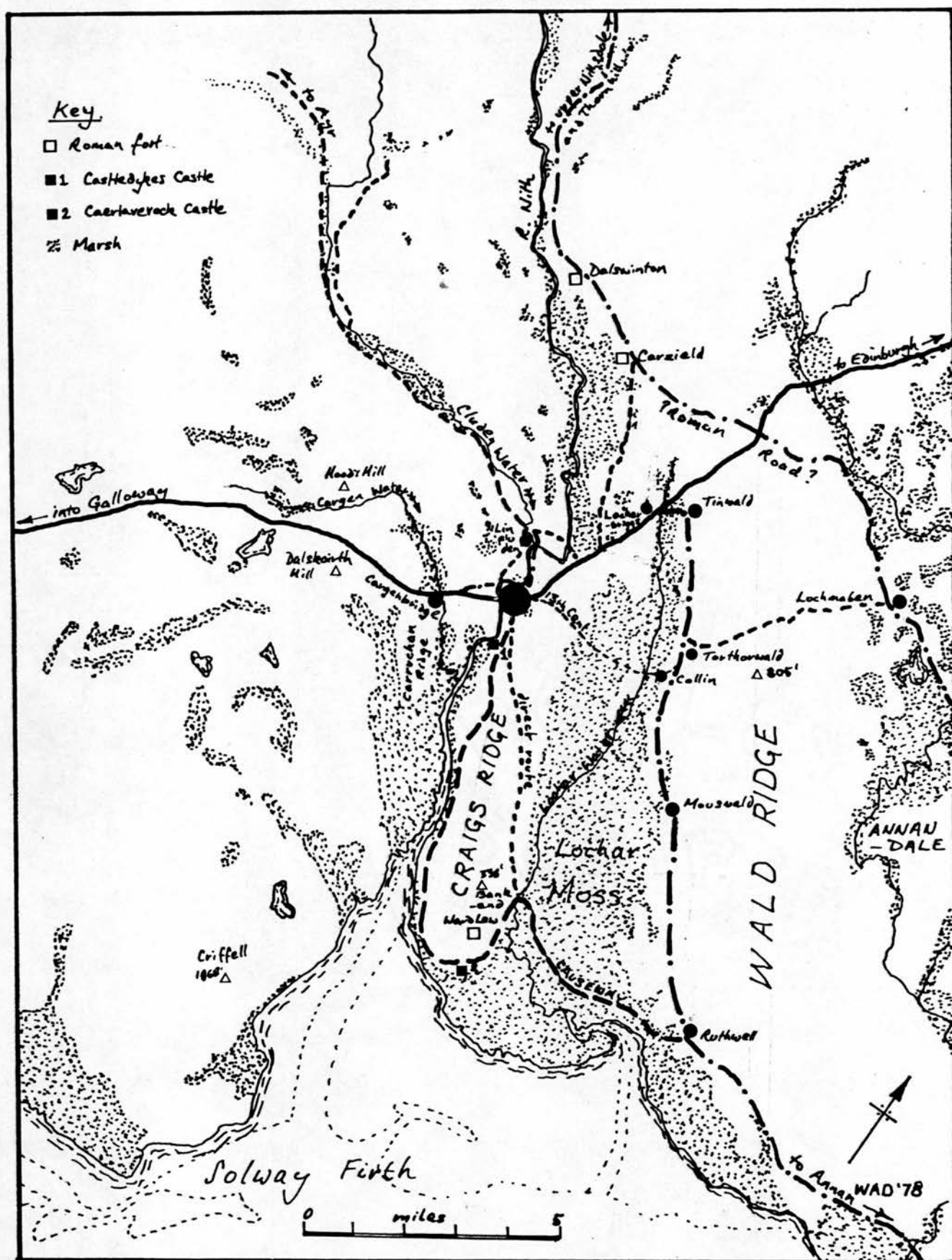


Fig. 8. The Setting of Dumfries.

on this intractable landscape, by reducing the limits of the extensive Lochar Moss, draining lesser bogs, straightening the lower reaches of the Nith, and building roads and railways on embankments across boggy areas which former travellers had to go miles to circumvent.

The River Nith is tidal up to the cauld (weir) of the Town Mills at Dumfries some nine miles above its mouth. This cauld dates from the eighteenth century but there was previously a similar cauld a few hundred yards upriver above the bridge and the Stakeford. The superior length of the river, and thus its size at Dumfries, is due to its having twice in the distant past extended its catchment by headward erosion, capturing in turn headwaters of the Clyde and of the Lugar Water, both of which drain northward from the line of the Southern Upland Fault (George Southern Uplands passim). The Nith enters the Dumfries Basin through a narrow gap near Dalswinton in the N-W. It runs through the lowlying area of Carzield Flats, formerly an extensive marsh, for about six miles, and is then deflected westward and southward by a belt of glacial moraines, to follow a winding course down the western side of the basin to the sea. The river may once have followed a more direct route southward down the middle of the broad shallow depression now occupied by the Lochar Water and the Lochar Moss, which is separated from the present course of the river by the long narrow Craigs Ridge, which rises to over 300' in places. The windings of the Nith where it threads its way through the glacial morraines are in a long established river bed which has not altered significantly in historical times. The bends do not constitute the kind of meanders which in some stages of a river's development tend to migrate downstream at an appreciable rate. Dumfries stands in a bend on the left bank of the river, and appart from some cutting-away of the bluff to the North of it, on the outside of the bend, and some deposit of sand, on the inside of the bend, further

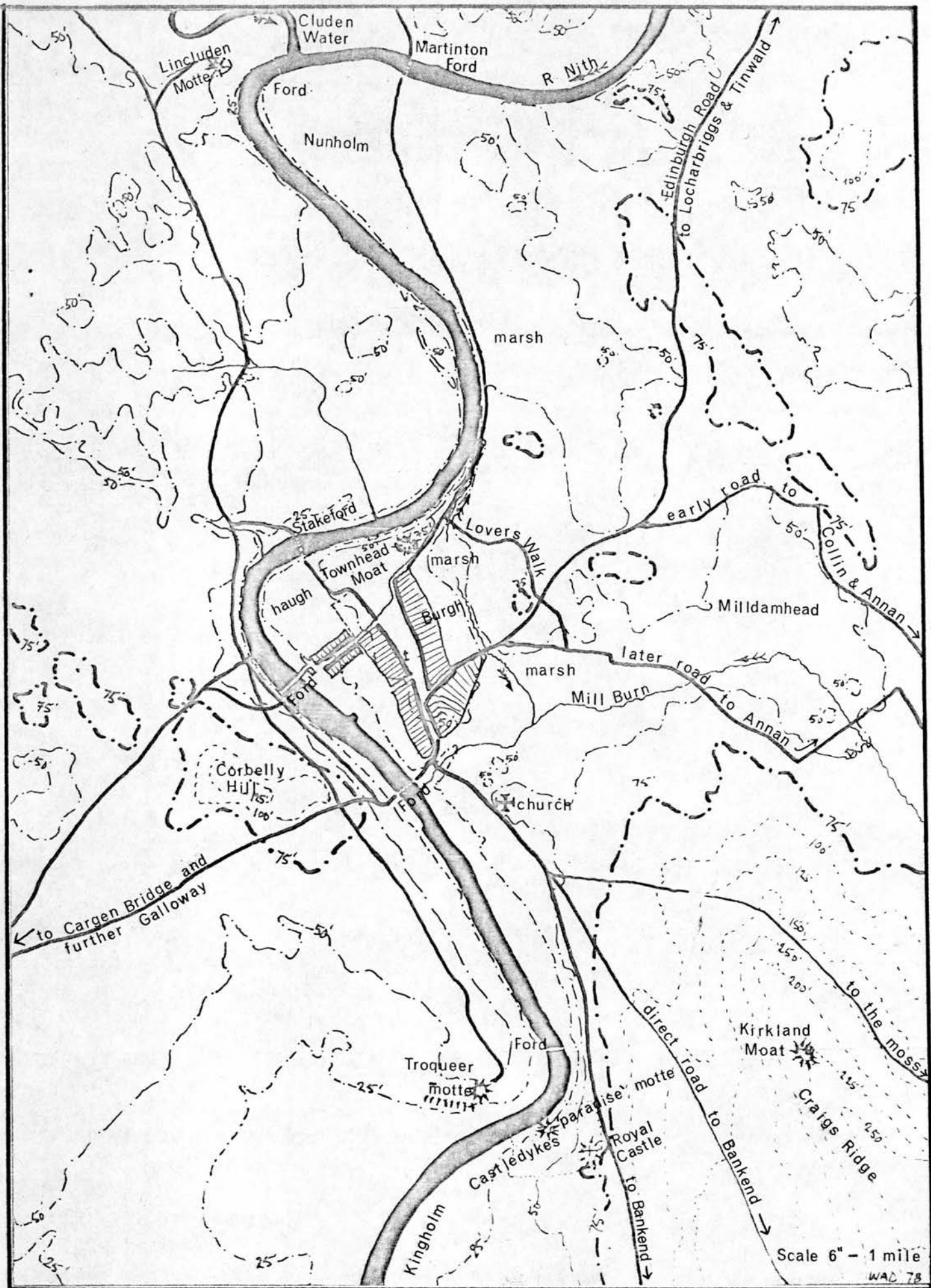


Fig. 9. Dumfries as a Focus of Early Roads.



downstream at Greensands and Whitesands, the position of the river has not changed appreciably in relation to the site of the town, during the period of the town's history.

#### DUMFRIES AS A FOCUS OF EARLY ROADS

As suggested already, the importance of Dumfries began when the progressive unification of the rest of Scotland began to impinge on the virtually independent region of Galloway. Previous to this the main Roman roads had penetrated northward from Carlisle by following the valley of the River Annan, which includes the Lochmaben Basin immediately to the East of the Dumfries Basin and separated from it by the Wald Ridge. A side-road running westward into the Dumfries Basin merely kept to the high ground north of the Lochar Moss to reach the fort at Dalswinton (extended rather later to that at Carzield) and then passed northward through the narrow valley to traverse the Thornhill Basin on the River Nith and then to rejoin the continuation of the Annandale Roman-Road at Crawford on the Clyde (O.S. : Roman Brit.). If indeed the Romans had a route southward from Carzield to a coastal fort at the foot of the Craigs Ridge, at Wardlaw, then they must have pioneered the line through the area of moraine, lochs and mosses lying between the marshy Carzield Flats and the equally impassable Lochar Moss, which route was the main approach to Dumfries from the rest of Scotland throughout the medieval period. However to establish why the town is where it is, at the north end of Craigs Ridge, rather than at its southern end in the vicinity of Wardlaw and Caerlaverock Castle and more convenient for the estuary, it is necessary to consider the routes and approaches to the River Nith on the Galloway side.



The broad ridge of high ground, with summits at 600 feet generally, which walls in Galloway and forms the western edge of the Dumfries Basin is passable only in a narrow zone a little over a mile wide, between Dalskairth Hill and Hoods Hill to the north of it. A narrow pass runs just under Dalskairth Hill but its trend is north-east to south-west so that it leads towards Kirkcudbright and the coast. To travel east-west between Galloway proper and the lands to the east a road (A 75 T) now follows the pass cut by the headwaters of the Gargen Water overlooked by Hoods Hill. This modern road traverses what must have been marshy areas at Drummore Bridge and Kilnford, and if its line was used at all in the medieval period, it must have been impassable at certain seasons of the year. The 'Old Military Road' which runs parallel with it following a high saddle in the hills, and consistently keeping to the better-drained uplands, probably represents the line of the main route into and out of Galloway in the medieval period. However, when travellers (or raiders) emerged into the Dumfries Basin some two miles WSW of Dumfries they were faced with yet further difficulties.

The effects of glaciation on the topography of the Dumfries Basin are very marked. There is a distinct axial trend SSE in the chains of low hills now remaining. These are either deposition features (drumlins and lateral or medial moraines) or resistant remains of the country-rock (the Currachan Ridge an outlier of the western wall of the Dumfries Basin, and the Craigs Ridge) usually with rock exposures on their oversteepened ENE flanks. Probably the Wald Ridge enclosing the Basin to the East, should also be regarded in this light.

The drainage determined by this glaciated topography is also generally SSE in this western part of the Basin bounded by uplands and having a high rainfall. The perennial streams follow this trend until, with much meandering near the confluence, they flow into the Nith. However the fluctuation in the ice margin in its gradual withdrawal, variations

in the resistance of the country-rock to glaciation, and raised beach material from the subsequent marine transgressions, have left scattered bands of material lying roughly at right-angles to the general trend of the surface topography. These interrupt the drainage locally, causing marshes or bogs, but they also may provide a footing for routes east-west which must cross the area against the general trend. It is along a belt of such material trending N-E to S-W, that Dumfries has been able to be approached from the Scottish side, and it is noticeable that where the Nith bends through this obstacle from Dalscone down to Kingholm Quay, there are three reaches of the river each running SSE, but staggered successively westwards. They are linked by shorter sections of the river flowing WSW. Dumfries stands on the second of these longer reaches; the only one to have an elevated area on both banks of the river to facilitate crossing. The stability of the course of the river in this section would seem to be due to the bends having been determined mainly by previous glacial activity, and much less by the dynamics of the river itself.

See Fig. 9  
opp. p. 42.

Above Dalscone the barrier of the Carzield Flats flanked the river, and below the site of the future Kingholm Quay, the tidal marshes flanked the Nith down to the Solway, so that all crossing in any case was restricted to the approximately four-mile stretch of river between these barriers. The travellers from Galloway coming into the Dumfries Basin by the restricted western entry, needed to travel ENE to the river crossing area, but they would find that the Cargen Water having been on the left hand while crossing the hills had swung round to cross in front of them (here called the Cargen Pow), since it conformed to the predominant SSE trend once it had entered the Basin. They could have gone southward following its right-hand bank against a hill-outlier, the Carruchan Ridge, but this ends as a peninsula in the marshy Flatts of Cargen where the Cargen Pow flows

into the Nith and there is no way of approaching the main river on dry land. In fact the Cargen had to be crossed where the higher land on the west bank of the Nith approached nearest to the N. end of the Currachan Ridge, in the vicinity of Cargen Bridge. Passing eastward from this minor crossing the travellers would head for the landmark of Corbilly Hill about a mile away on the west bank of the River Nith, across relatively dry and rising ground.

Captain J.D. Ballantyne has suggested that the old route passing over the southern shoulder of Corbilly Hill and crossing by the ford to land at the southern end of Dumfries town was the main route, suggesting that it was more direct and drier than the alternative along the northern side (Ballantyne Routes in Nithsdale, 14). However the route over the northern shoulder of Corbilly Hill led down to the ford in line with Friars Vennel which was the more important entrance into Dumfries once the burgh was established, and it was on this route that the medieval Bridge of Dumfries was built to improve communication with Galloway. The relative importance of these two main fords will be examined further when the site and development of the town is discussed.

The bend in the river above the town was able to be crossed, at the Stakeford, giving a route from Dumfries leading northward to join the route from the Brig-end of Dumfries going north past Lincluden. Just below the confluence of the Cluden Water on the Galloway side and the Nith, a mile above Dumfries, there was another possible crossing place near to Lincluden mote. Also a little further upriver a ford at Martinton gave a route northward from Dumfries which did not have to ford the Cluden Water. Higher up than this marshes prevented a crossing for some miles. Below the major ford approached over the southern shoulder of Corbilly Hill, there was another recognised ford about half a mile below the town at Castledykes crossing to Troqueer on the Galloway side. This

was the lowest ford. The Royal Castle of Dumfries was built there. The Mote of Troqueer stands opposite on the Galloway bank of the Nith.

The tide used to flow up past the site of Dumfries and at low water in the summer months it may have been possible to cross the Nith in several places upriver of Castledykes, but in the winter floods or when the tidal bore was running up the river, even the best fords may have been dangerous or impossible to use. For those who could afford the dues, the bridge when built no doubt proved a great convenience, and it also served the pilgrims to the shrines at Whithorn.

The Wald Ridge which forms the eastern rim of the Dumfries Basin allows entry to the basin at three points. To the south there is a gap between the high land and the sea, at Ruthwell. Further north the narrow valley of the Ryemuir Burn provides a route westward from Lochmaben in Annandale over to Torthorwald. In the north-west the Amisfield Gap provides a route for the most direct road from Edinburgh, which enters the basin at Tinwald and then proceeds via Locharbriggs to Dumfries. Early routes from Annan followed the coast to Ruthwell, the site of a great Anglian high-cross, and then were deflected northward along the western flank of the Wald Ridge by the impassable barrier of the Lochar Moss. The route led northward through Mouswald and Torthorwald and then joined the 'Edinburgh Road' at Tinwald. These three place-names indicate a zone of Danish settlement which ended at the Lochar Moss, which formed a most effective border to Galloway long before the political boundary was fixed at the River Nith. Dumfries is a Gaelic place-name.

See Fig. 8  
opp. p. 41.

The first improvement to this circuitous approach from the east, seems to have been the construction of a road carried on embankments from Cockpool near Ruthwell to Bankend near the south end of the Craigs Ridge, whence it went round the

end of the ridge, past the site of Caerlaverock Castle, and proceeded northward beside the Nith to Castledykes and Dumfries. The ford at Bankend was replaced by a bridge in 1617 (Shirley Dumfries 38). A more difficult route took off from Bankend and crossed the crest of the Craigs Ridge to approach Dumfries by a more direct line. As late as the sixteenth century there were only two roads considered of any military value: that by Locharbriggs and that by Bankend. (Armstrong Liddesdale app. p. cx : Shirley Dumfries 37-8).

In 1264 the sheriff of Dumfries was allowed in the Exchequer the comparatively large sum of £35. 12s 4d. for work done to a footpath (semitam) between Collin and Dumfries across the moss (ER.i.16). General William Roy's M.S. Map of Scotland, for which southern Scotland was surveyed in 1752-4 (Skelton Survey 3), shows an embanked road to Dumfries running across the Lochar Moss from the direction of Collin between Torthorwald and Mousewald, much on the line of the present A 75. The work involved in constructing the road suggests that this route probably did not come into general use until after the Middle Ages. As a routeway it is most unlikely to have had any influence on the early layout of the town of Dumfries. The direct route from Torthorwald to Dumfries (the present A 709) was built shortly before 1791 (Dr. Burnside's M S. quoted in Shirley Dumfries 38).

From being founded on a convenient site close to a strategic river crossing, Dumfries in time became a nodal point attracting further roads, but it is the older lines of movement and the way these may have affected the town plan locally in the central area of the town designed to accommodate the necessary functions of the proposed new burgh, that are most likely to have influenced the layout of the early town-plan of Dumfries. These were, in order of importance, the 'Edinburgh Road' approaching the town from the north-east; the road out of Galloway bifurcating to cross the major river fords to



Friars Vennel and to Nith Place at the foot of the High Street; the road from Bankend via Castledykes; and the route from Lincluden by the Stakeford, and that from the lands north of the Cluden Water by the Martinton Ford. The interaction of these routeways with particular topography of the ground and the needs of the proposed town layout, will be discussed when the site of the town is considered.

part two:

HISTORY

## SOURCES OF WRITTEN EVIDENCE

### Primary Sources:

Although it can be established that Dumfries was fairly certainly erected into a burgh by William I, king of Scots, at some time between 1165 and 1188, there is no charter recording in which year this took place, or the privileges granted to the new community. The other large burgh in the south-west, Ayr, had its charter of erection from the same king in 1203-7 ( RRS. ii No 462), in which William granted that all his burgesses dwelling within the burgh should have all the liberties and free customs that his other burghs and burgesses had elsewhere in his realm. As this is the earliest burgh charter known, and as there are very few surviving documents of any kind written in Scotland before the 1120's, it is possible that Dumfries was created a burgh at a period before it became customary in Scotland to fortify the act of burgh creation with a permanent written record in the form of a royal charter.

#### a. Public Records

Public records throw little light on the burgh's foundation or on the early period of the burgh development. In the role of overlord of Scotland Edward I had the public records of Scotland removed to Westminster at the end of the thirteenth century and only a few chance fragments from what must have been several complete series of administrative records survive in either Scotland or England. The records of the Royal chancery, exchequer and law courts, essential to sound government, and in which passing references might have shown the existence and nature of early Dumfries, generally no longer exist. The few fragmentary remains were published in official

collections in the nineteenth century. The first volume of Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland (1844) includes a collection of early documents. Among them are an inventory of documents at Edinburgh Castle in 1292 with a reference to a letter of the Burgesses of Dumfries quitclaiming all royal debts, and another inventory of 1296 with a reference to a Roll of Accounts from 1291 beginning "Homines burgi de Dunfres....." (APS i 116, 118). Also there is the report of a law case at Dumfries ( *ibid.* i 97-8) in the reign of Alexander III (1249-86). The later progress of the burgh can be traced in scattered references recorded in the APS volumes. In 1357 Dumfries was among seventeen burghs at a General Council held at Edinburgh to arrange for the ransoming of David II (i 517), and the burgh appeared in full Parliament in 1469 (ii 93). The first volume of Exchequer Rolls of Scotland (1878) prints, from seventeenth century transcripts, some financial records for 1263-6 and 1288-90 with the surviving records for 1328 onwards. The early records show the sheriff of Dumfries in 1266 claiming expenditure on masonry at the castle, and for alms granted by the king to the Greyfriars at Dumfries ( ER, i 17). This is the earliest record of the existence of the Convent of the Minorite Friars (St. Mary's) which long formed an important element in the layout of Dumfries. Other exchequer records show that the burgh was probably first represented in Parliament in 1328 (ER, i 74) and record its contribution to the ransom of David II 1366-74 (ER, ii 257, 342, 354, 432). The burgh obtained a feu-ferme charter from Robert III in 1395 (RMS, i, app.i, 153). The comparative economic importance of the later burgh can be gauged from the periodic stent rolls of the Convention of Royal Burghs from 1535 onwards (Recs. Conv. R. Burghs i. 514-5, iv 40, 371, v. 196-7). The later records of government give an increasing volume of information about the burgh from the sixteenth century but are less relevant to the early development of Dumfries.

English public records contain much information relating to Scotland, some of which has been printed, eg. in Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland (1881-4) edited by Joseph Bain. Edward I strengthened and enclosed the castle of Dumfries with a peel in 1300. The accounts for the building works are extant in the Exchequer Records in the Public Record Office and were used for the account of the works in The History of the Kings Works (i, 411) (ed. Brown, Taylor and Colvin 1963). The papal archives have numerous references to Scotland. They were made available in Calendar of Papal Registers, Letters i (ed. W.H.Bliss, 1893). ~~An excess~~ indulgence ~~ation~~ for alms towards the building of the bridge of Dumfries and the enlargement of St. Mary's chapel nearby was granted in 1431-2 (ibid.viii, 347).

b. Narrative Sources

Although remote from the centre of the kingdom there is some information about the south-west among the early narrative sources for Scotland published in translation in A.O.Anderson's Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers (1908) and the same author's Early Sources of Scottish History, 500-1286 (2 vols 1922). For the period 1153 to 1214 A.G.Lawrie's Annals of the Reigns of Malcolm IV and William (1910) is a useful collection. With more reference to the south of Scotland the most helpful Scottish sources are The Chronicle of Melrose (ed. A.O. & M.O. Anderson 1936), Chronicle of John of Fordun (ed. W.F.Skene 1871-2) and Joannis de Fordun Scoti-chronicon cum Supplementis et Continuatione Walteri Boweri (ed. W. Goodall 1759). Some English chroniclers took an interest in Scotland and two works by Roger Howden, sometime Henry II's envoy into Galloway, are of interest. These are: Benedict of Peterborough Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi (ed. W. Stubbs: Rolls Series No 49), and Roger Howden Chronica (ed. W. Stubbs: Rolls Series No. 51). These sources are useful in providing a general background of events but also in providing clues to the interpretation of documentary evidence, such as charters, having a closer bearing on the



foundation and development of the king's burgh at Dumfries.

c. Charters and Other Deeds.

In the absence of a charter of foundation for Dumfries, the most fruitful source of information is the references relating to Nithsdale and Dumfries in other contemporary charters. These generally record the granting of land or privileges and many have survived, often transcribed in the cartularies of religious houses. A collection of all such known documents relating to Scotland up to 1153 was published as Early Scottish Charters (ESC) by A.C. Lawrie in 1905. Subsequent discoveries were incorporated in Regesta Regum Scottorum, i, (1153-1165) edited by G.W.S. Barrow (1960), and this series has progressed to (RRS. ii) Acts of William I (1165-1214) also edited by Barrow (1971). At present a Handlist of the Acts of Alexander II (1214- 1242) by J.M. Scoular (1959), and Handlist of the Acts of Alexander III, The Guardians and John (1249-1296) by G.G. Simpson (1960) cover the period down to the War of Independence.

The original cartularies and collections from which the Regesta is being compiled were mostly published in editions by nineteenth century historical clubs and contain additional charters not granted by the kings of Scots. Those with documents which relate particularly to Dumfriesshire are those for Kelso Abbey (Liber S. Marie de Calchou, Bannatyne Club 1846, otherwise Kelso Liber), for Melrose Abbey (Liber Sancte Marie de Melros, Bannatyne Club 1837, otherwise Melrose Liber), for Glasgow Cathedral (Registrum Episcopatus Glassuensis, Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs 1843, otherwise Glasgow Registrum), The Register and Records of Holm Cultram (eds. F. Grainger and W. G. Collingwood 1929, otherwise Holm Cultram Register), and there are early charters in the family papers printed in Sir William Fraser's The Annandale Family Book of the Johnstones 1894 (Fraser, Annandale). It is unfortunate that no cartularies or charter collections survive for the nine medieval religious houses in Galloway, among which Sweetheart Abbey

Holywood Abbey and Lincluden Nunnery were within a few miles of Dumfries.

Of particular reference to Dumfries is a group of fifteenth- and Sixteenth century deeds associated with the last century of the Greyfriars convent there. These were printed in The Scottish Greyfriars by W.M. Bryce (ii, 101-123). A more varied group of documents, many from the Burgh Charter Chest, were printed as appendix A to Reid's edition of Edgar's History of Dumfries (1915). The Protocol Book (1541-1550) of Herbert Anderson, notary in Dumfries, throws some light on the burgh at the time and abstracts have been printed in Dumfriesshire Trans (1913-14).

d. Burgh Records

The records of the proceedings of burgh councils, courts or guilds, the burgess rolls and registers of property transactions, seldom survive from earlier than the sixteenth century. At Dumfries some records have survived almost complete from 1506. The Burgh Court Book begun in that year also gives some extracts from records of the previous century (Truckell Summary pt 6, p.2). There is a large mass of records now in the keeping of the burgh museum. Its extent may be gauged from the report that at a Town Hall fire in 1908 nearly twenty sacks of the Town's papers had to be rescued (Reid Dumfries 4). There is a wealth of source material for the seventeenth century and the curator writing in 1968 stated that there was a ton or so of loose records for the eighteenth century still to be dealt with (Truckell Summary pt 8, p. 1: pt 9, p.1). The Town Council Minutes are continuous from 1643 and have been used, along with the other archives, by several generations of local scholars. The various series of the Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society (founded 1862) make available the results of their researches, often giving documents in extenso. The most comprehensive publication of

information from these sources has been in three notable works: (1) the extensively annotated edition of Edgar's History of Dumfries by R.C.Reid in 1915 (Reid Dumfries); (2) the topographical study The Growth of a Scottish Burgh by G.W.Shirley (1915) originally intended to form part of Reid's volume (Shirley Dumfries) and (3) the more recent Dumfries Museum publication Dumfries: A Summary History by A.E.Truckell (1968) (Truckell Summary).

### Secondary Sources

#### a. Local Histories

In the late seventeenth century Dr.George Archibald prepared an 'Account of the Curiosities at Dumfries' for Macfarlane's Geographical Collection (printed in Dumfriesshire Trans XVII 1906: Macfarlane's Geog. Coll. iii 185, Scot Hist. Soc. 1908) but the fuller accounts begin in the eighteenth century. In 1746 Robert Edgar wrote 'An Introduction to the History of Dumfries' (published for the first time in 1915, ed, R.C. Reid) and he acknowledges his debt to 'mine author', whose work has not survived. As with most of the local histories Edgar's account is not only an interpretation of previous times but can be regarded as a primary source of information about Dumfries in his own time. Edgar's manuscript was used by Dr. William Burnside, who as Minister was asked to produce information on the parish for Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland. His lengthy manuscript of 1790 was the basis of the article on the 'Town and Parish of Dumfries' published in the (Old) Statistical Account of Sir John Sinclair (Edinburgh 1793, V, 119-44).

The first formal history of the town to be published was that by William Bennett in the numbers of the Dumfries Monthly Magazine. It did not go beyond the beginning of the sixteenth Century due to the failure of the magazine, after beginning

in June 1826. There is much of an historical nature in the old forms of burgh government described in the reports of the Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations (Scotland), including an account of the state of the burgh in 1692 (Local Reports Pt.1, 209-16: Appendix to General Report 43-4, London 1835). In 1845 the New Statistical Account appeared with an article on the 'Parish of Dumfries' by the local ministers Rev. Robert Wallace and Rev. Thomas T. Duncan (iv, 1-28) and in 1867 William McDowall published his History of the Burgh of Dumfries with notices of Nithsdale, Annandale, and the Western Border. He appears to have based his account of the early period on William Bennett's History of Dumfries, but his bulky volume superseded this and remains the standard work on the Burgh. McDowell produced a revised and expanded edition, with a plan of the town attached, in 1873, and died in 1888. (A third edition was issued in 1906 with additional notes by T. Wilson who stated in the preface that George Neilson had provided a number of notes or material for notes to the earlier chapters and had revised the proofs of these chapters. The third edition was reprinted in 1972 with a supplementary chapter carrying the history of the burgh up to that time.)

George Neilson was the chief proponent of the garrison theory for the origin of burghs in Scotland (see 'On Some Scottish Burghal Origins' Juridical Review xiv (1902) 129-40), and in 1899 he wrote a series of newspaper articles which were republished in the Dumfriesshire Transactions under the title 'Dumfries: its burghal origins' (3rd ser. ii (1914) 157-76). By comparison of charters and evidence from annals he sought to establish that the charter in which Dumfries is first mentioned as a burgh dated from July or August 1186 (ibid.170). The validity of his conclusions must still be the starting point of any discussion of the early history of Dumfries.

In 1915 Robert Edgar's manuscript An Introduction to the

History of Dumfries of 1746 was published for the first time. It was edited with an introduction and such extensive annotations (by R.C. Reid) that this additional matter stands as a substantial contribution to the history of the town, in its own right (to be referred to as 'Reid Dumfries' while Edgar's matter will be referred to as 'Edgar History') (see p.53 above). Intended as part of this edition of Edgar's History but published separately in the Dumfriesshire Transactions (3rd Ser. (1915) iii) and as a separate publication (Dumfries 1915), was the valuable consideration of the historical topography of the burgh by G.W. Shirley, the burgh librarian, The Growth of a Scottish Burgh: a study in the early history of Dumfries. This makes extensive use of documentary sources and earlier histories to reconstruct the topography of the area and has a plan (at approx 6" to 1 mile) showing Dumfries in the 16th century. There are several other helpful articles in the Dumfriesshire Transactions by Shirley, and also several by J. Barbour between 1885 and 1911 on the castle and the Greyfriars Convent.

More recently G.S.Pryde dealt briefly with the evidence on Dumfries in 'The burghs of Dumfriesshire and Galloway: their origin and status' (Dumfriesshire Trans 3rd ser. xxix (1952) 81-131) and his views are summarised (with an addition by A.A.M.Duncan) in his The Burghs of Scotland: A Critical List, (1965) 13.

There is a short historical contribution by A. E.Truckell in the Dumfriesshire volume of the Third Statistical Account (ed. George Houston (1962) 34-9) but the major contribution by Truckell has been Dumfries: a summary history (Dumfries Museum Leaflet No 20, n.d. but can be dated to 1968 from internal evidence). This is based on the author's extensive researches in the unpublished archives of the burgh, and is the most authoritative statement yet on the later history of the burgh. In Leaflet No 21 The Growth of Dumfries (? 1968)



Truckell provides a series of rough sketch maps to show the later development of the town. The short account by Robert Gourlay and Anne Turner in Historic Dumfries: the archaeological implications of development (Scottish Burgh Survey: Glasgow University Dept of Archaeology 1977) is the latest statement on the burgh, and, for its historical details, it is dependent on Truckell and previous writers. The hypothetical reconstruction of the town plan suggesting burgh expansions after c.1400 is open to question.

b. Scottish History

The most recent general accounts of Scottish history based on modern scholarship are contained in the four volumes of The Edinburgh History of Scotland under the general editorship of Gordon Donaldson (I Scotland: the making of the kingdom by A.A.M.Duncan, II Scotland: the later Middle Ages by R.G. Nicholson, III Scotland: James V to James VII by G.Donaldson and IV Scotland: 1689 to the present by W. Ferguson.) From an earlier generation W.Croft Dickinson's Scotland from the earliest times to 1603 (3rd edit. revised and edited by A.A.M.Duncan, Oxford 1977) is particularly helpful for the period before 1286. Feudal Britain: the completion of the medieval kingdoms 1066-1314 (1956) by G.W.S.Barrow presents a satisfactory and co-ordinated account of this period in all parts of Britain. The same author's The Kingdom of the Scots: Government Church and Society from the eleventh to the fourteenth century (1973) is basic to an understanding of the period, and together with his introductions and notes to the first two volumes of the Regesta Regum Scottorum presents a view of Scottish history rather different to that propounded by A.A.M.Duncan. Both Duncan and Barrow have made useful comments on the meaning of the evidence on the founding and early history of Dumfries. Barrow's article 'The pattern of lordship and feudal settlement in Cumbria' (Journal of Med. History i (1975) 117-38) has particular relevance to Dumfries and Galloway.

c. Architecture

The standard work by D. MacGibbon and T. Ross Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland (5 vols 1887-92) unfortunately has little to say on the burgh of Dumfries, but the Inventory of the County of Dumfries prepared by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (1920) has short notices of the Midsteeple, Castledykes, the Mote, the Old Bridge, fragments from Maxwell House and St. Christopher's Chapel, and old gravestones at St. Michael's church (ibid 48-53). J. G. Dunbar's The Historic Architecture of Scotland (1966) refers to the Old Bridge, St. Michael's Church and the Midsteeple, and the work at Dumfries castle under Edward I is discussed in The History of the King's Works (ed. Brown, Taylor and Colvin (1963) i, 411) and in The Scottish Castle by Stewart Cruden (revised edit. 1963). The Saltire Society pamphlet The Scottish Tradition in Burgh Architecture by Ian. G. Lindsay (1948) makes some reference to Dumfries.

There are numerous articles in the Dumfriesshire Transactions on particular buildings at Dumfries. Following the discussion of the Greyfriars Convent in W. M. Bryce's The Scottish Greyfriars (1909 i, 199-217), James Barbour contributed an article (New Ser. xxiii (1911) 18-35) and G. W. Shirley another (3rd Ser. i (1913) 303-41) on the convent. The Castle of Dumfries was discussed by James Barbour (New Ser. xvii (1906) 362: xviii (1907) 48) and the 'House of the Maxwells of Nithsdale at Dumfries' (xviii (1907) 186-192). The Market Cross was discussed by both Barbour and Shirley (xvii (1906) 85-90: 201-14). There are notes on and engravings of the Old Turnpike House, the Pillars and The Bishop's House, all demolished in the early nineteenth century, (in 3rd ser. i 348), and notes on some old burgh houses (in 3rd ser. xix 92-3).

The official List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest for the Royal Burgh of Dumfries was issued in 1959. Thirty one buildings within the area of the ancient burgh

are now graded A or B and are thus given statutory protection from unauthorised demolition or alteration. A further seventeen are graded C, having been considered not quite worthy of statutory protection. The four buildings listed in the highest grade are the burgh's oldest structure the fifteenth century Old Bridge, the eighteenth century Mid Steeple, and St. Michael's Church and Burn's House, both of the eighteenth century. It is likely that many more of the traditional stone houses in the centre of the town, which contribute so much to its character, will be given statutory protection when the List is revised. The buildings of all grades are indicated on a plan appended to Historic Dumfries the archaeological implications of development by Robert Gourlay and Anne Turner (1977). The investigators preparing the present List appear to have relied on the New Statistical Account and the RCAHM Dumfriesshire Inventory in their descriptions. Further information on dates and architects is available in McDowall's History of Dumfries and in F.H.Groome's Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland (ii (1883) 390-7).

## THE EVIDENCE ON BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES : ONE

### OLD HOUSES

In introducing their comments on houses in Aberdeen, MacGibbon and Ross in 1892 wrote:

"The ancient buildings of Aberdeen are, like those of most of our Scottish towns, rapidly disappearing, so that probably before the [19th] century finishes most of the towns in Scotland will be possessed of no more interest to the historian and antiquary than the cities of America and Australia which have sprung up during the present generation. Some of them have already achieved this distinction. Perth, which was once famous for its churches and houses, has been swept bare; hardly anything remains in Dumfries or Ayr; and Glasgow which half a century ago was rich in ancient remains, has lost nearly everything, including its splendid college, a masterpiece of seventeenth century Scottish architecture." ( Cast. and Dom. Arch. V 77)

One may suspect that the authors considered that there could be nothing of interest to the historian (or antiquary) in the cities of America and Australia. Alternatively their words can be taken quite properly as a percipient and accurate estimation of the aspects of colonial cities, and of Dumfries itself, which would survive to engage the interests of future historians: viz. the pattern of the layout of the town and the traditional character of the mainly eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings surviving on its building plots. The layouts of the streets and building plots at Dumfries are quite ancient and, in common with other medieval towns in Scotland and much of Europe, originally would be built up with fairly permanent timber buildings. Recurrent fires and rebuildings coupled with a concern over being up-to-date may have influenced changes, first of all introducing timber-framed houses with plastered panels, and then stone buildings, often with projecting timber galleries. Some examples of these at Edinburgh survived to be recorded by MacGibbon and Ross at the end of the last century, and a building with timber

galleries can still be seen at Edinburgh (John Knox's House) and another at Ayr (Loudoun Hall- gallery restored).

The date of the general introduction of stone houses in Scottish towns remains uncertain. The dating of lintels and skew-putts (gable kneelers) came into vogue in the late sixteenth century and deeds for town houses are generally lacking for the pre-Reformation period, so that there has been a tendency to assume that undated older stone houses surviving in Scottish towns are unlikely to date from before the sixteenth century ( eg. Dunbar Hist. Arch. Scot. 170-1). Examination of the fabric of Gadgirth House at Ayr during demolition, and of 67-69 South Street St. Andrews during alterations, has since shown that late medieval stone houses can survive disguised by later works (Brooks Urban Archaeology 29), and it is likely that the traditional harled (roughcast) exteriors of many burgh buildings may conceal the remains of medieval stone houses. This is not to suggest that there was a complete change-over to building in stone about 1450-1500 (the period of the original work at St. Andrews). The change must have been gradual, starting with the richest families and then spreading to the houses of lesser men. Travellers accounts from the mid-seventeenth century agree in describing the majority of burgh houses then as still being wholly or partly of timber (quoted in Dunbar, Hist. Arch. Scot. 174). In Edinburgh the finer houses had stone walls fronted by enclosed timber galleries providing circulation or additional accommodation<sup>m</sup> for the upper floors, which were reached by a forestair projecting into the street. oh  
ml

The arcades formed by the timber posts supporting such galleries lined the main streets and often provided a convenient covered way. This feature was reproduced in the stone arcades which were a feature of the main streets of many burghs in the later seventeenth century. Daniel Defoe described those at Glasgow in the early eighteenth century



(Defoe Tour 605). Examples survive at Edinburgh and Elgin. A similar house in the High Street at Dumfries, known as 'The Pillars', was demolished circa 1825, but it was the subject of several surviving drawings ( D.Trans 3rd ser. (1915) 216, 349). Thatched roofs seem to have been common in Dumfries into the eighteenth century (Edgar History 61-2), and the apparent absence of seventeenth century buildings may be a consequence not only of later demolitions, but also of destruction by fire. A report on Dumfries to the Convention of Royal Burghs in 1692, after a period of depressed trade, stated that:

'the most part of their houses are inhabited by their respective heretors, and their other tenements and houses will not amount to above three per cent; and that these will be about twentie tenements on the High Street ruinous, besides some houses in closes; and that the wholl north syde off Lochmabengate, being a long street, was totally destroyed by fire about a twelve month since, or therby, a great deall whereof is as yeit unbuilt' (Appendix to the General Report of the Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations (Scotland) 1835, 44).

On 24th June 1723 the Town Council enacted that new buildings, or buildings the roofs of which required thorough repair, were not to be thatched, but were to be roofed with slates or tiles, under pain of £100 scots. They subsequently used their powers to enforce this rule (Town Council Minutes 24th June 1723 and 29th November 1925, quoted by Reid Dumfries 164).

Without giving his sources McDowall states (History 3rd ed, 130) that stone houses were rare in Dumfries until the reign of James III (1460-1488). It is clear that during the sixteenth century they were still sufficiently uncommon to be specifically mentioned as being of stone, in property deeds. There is evidence of at least nine stone houses in the burgh between 1508 and 1585:

- 1508 a stone house in the Chapelside (Reid Dumfries 231)
- 1519 a great stone house, N side Friars Vennelhead  
(ibid. 234)

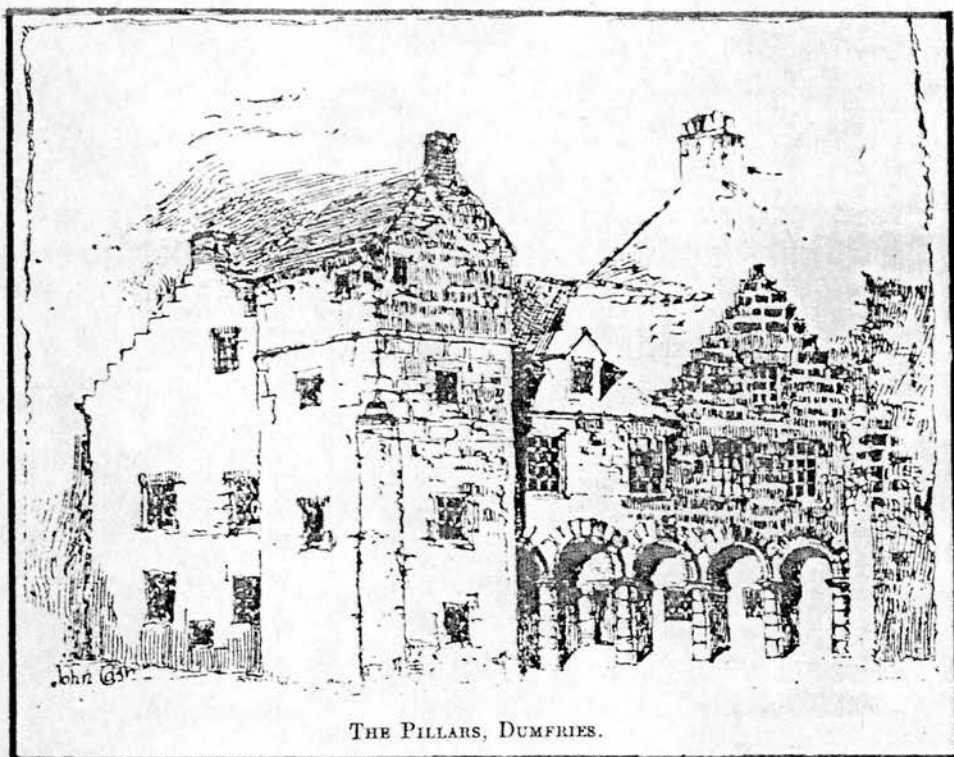
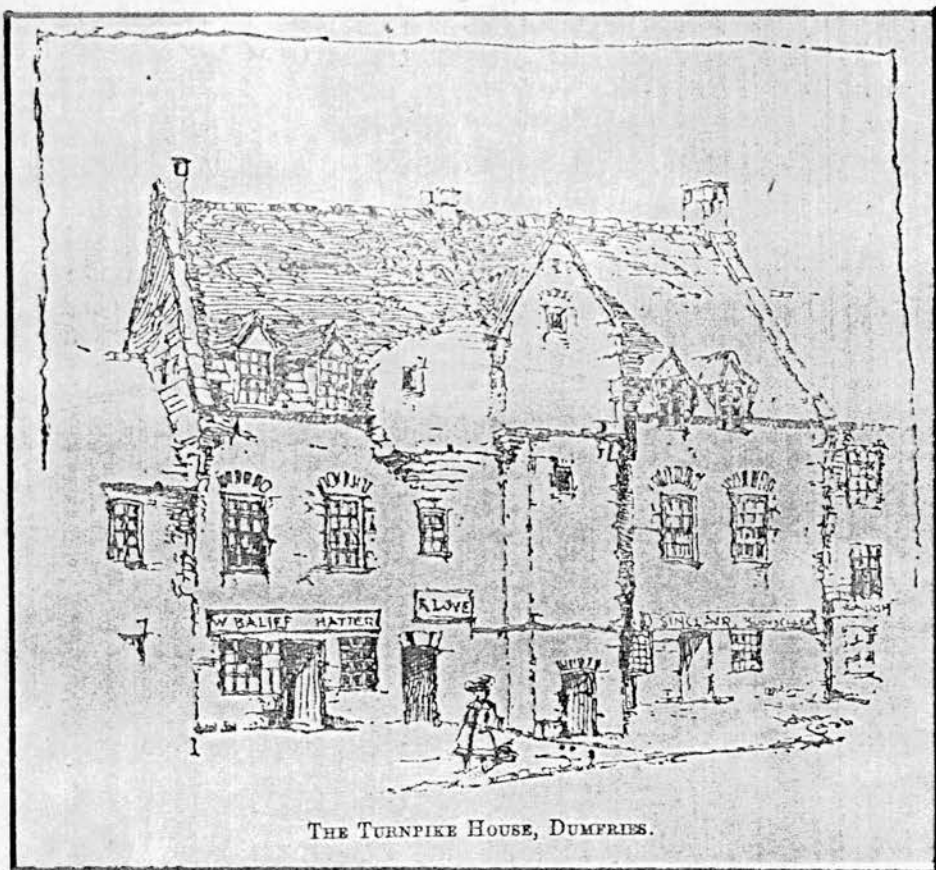


Fig. 10. Old Houses.

1541 a great stone house called St. Grigors Place

(ibid 137)

1543 a large stone house (Andersons Protocol Bk, D. Trans  
3rd ser ii 198)

1545 a foirstane house (Reid Dumfries 244)

1557 a little stone house (Shirley Greyfriars 312)

1561 ane haill land, stane biggin and foirtenment (Reid  
Dumfries 238)

1579 date stone in the rear wall of 48, English St.

'HPR 1579: Rebuilt 1856', noted in 1934 (D. Trans  
3rd series, xix 93).

1585 dated stone spout on Old Bridge from Young's Corner  
at Vennelhead (Truckell Auld Brig 2)

The character of a large Dumfries stone house of the seventeenth century can be judged from the drawing of the townhouse of the Sharpes of Hoddum, known as Hoddum's Stone House, or the Turnpike House, made before its demolition in 1826. It was of two storeys with attics. The best rooms were on the first floor reached by a turnpike stair which projected into the street and had a gabled top storey carried on corbels. The house appears to have occupied the heads of more than one burgage plot and lay parallel to the High Street. Its roof was covered with large stone slabs (D. Trans 3rd Ser. i opp. 152: 348).

Evidence of a much older building tradition came to light in the nineteen twenties, when houses with their roofs supported on pairs of stout curved timbers, called crucks, were found during demolition for slum clearance in the vicinity of Munches Street, formerly Ewe and Lamb Close, on the east side of the High Street (McDowall History (1972 ed.) vi). This was probably a case of the late survival of a local building tradition, rather than the survival of ancient buildings (Dunbar Hist. Arch. Scot. 224-8). It seems likely that this more primitive type of construction may have been used for the lower and less important buildings which were built along one side of the long narrow plots running back

from the main houses on the street frontage.

The earliest known house surviving at Dumfries is the Old Bridge House built against the western abutment of the Old Bridge on the downstream side. This appears to be the house built in 1660 by James Birkmyre, a barrel-maker living in Brigend, for which the Town Council granted a feu on 27th August 1660 (Truckell Old Bridge House 1). The house is of red sandstone rubble walling, two storeys high with a slate roof. There is a short two-storey back wing of the same construction. The interior has six rooms on two floors served by a turnpike stair constructed within the body of the house. On the side fronting the bridge there are the remains of arch-headed openings revealed by the removal of harling. The house appears to have been considerably altered.

In the official List of Buildings of architectural or historic interest the Globe Inn, 56 High Street, is stated to be of seventeenth century origin, but this building, and the 'Hole i' the wa' Inn' also in the High Street, appear to be eighteenth-century rebuildings of the earlier inns on these sites.

The majority of the traditional eighteenth century and early nineteenth century houses which line the main streets of Dumfries are of ~~three~~ three storeys having quite steep slate roofs with their eaves along the street front. The walls are of stone with raised margins around the regularly spaced sash windows. The older houses are plastered and painted externally. The later ones are faced in the fine red ashlar from the local quarries. The regular width of the frontages of these buildings is due to their occupying the heads of the ancient burgage plots or rigs which seem to have been planned to have a uniform width and have governed the frontage available for building ever since. Most of the houses still have a side-passage or pend giving access from the street to the long plot behind. If this plot has been built up as a 'close', the passage may have become a public thoroughfare.



This pattern is still especially marked on the west side of the High Street between Friars Vennel and Bank Street. Many of these houses have barrel-vaulted cellars which Mr.Truckell considers may date back to the sixteenth century, and could possibly have been interconnected (from personal conversation in 1978).

The houses and layout of the 'Georgian' extension of the town, built to the north of the New Church in the early nineteenth century, are pleasant, regular and typical of their time but throw little light on the history of the old town. They occupy an area which was not developed in the medieval period, and the significance of this fact will be discussed later.



THE EVIDENCE ON BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES: TWO

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES - PRE BURGHAL PERIOD

The buildings and structures which served the institutions and public life of the medieval and sub-medieval burgh of Dumfries are each likely to have been reconstructed several times while maintaining their accustomed positions in the town's layout. When their economic, religious or legal significance had passed as happened generally at the Reformation and in the second half of the eighteenth century, they were mostly demolished and cleared away in a prompt and business-like fashion, or the buildings may have been put to other uses. The growth of interest in the history and antiquities of the burgh in the later nineteenth century led to the preservation of the few authentic historic structures which had survived (notably the Old Bridge and the Mid Steeple) but it also confused the picture, e.g. by encouraging the erection of new churches in the gothic style near the sites where a medieval Friary church and a chantry chapel had once stood ( Greyfriars and St. Mary's).

The factor of continuity on the same site is of particular significance at Dumfries, where many of these structures have disappeared but where the street layout and plot boundaries of the central area have been relatively unchanged (they were recorded with precision in the plans of the Ordnance Survey in 1854-58). A Victorian fountain now stands ~~at~~ near the site of the medieval Fish Cross and the open space of Queensberry Square occupies the site of a fourteenth century fortification called in documents the New Wark. Narrowing of a street may indicate the site of one of the town's ports (gates), and a street name may indicate the position of a vanished topographical feature such as Loreburn Street, from a stream which used to run southwards forming a useful defensive line along the burgh's eastern side (the motto of the

burgh is 'A Loreburn' which is said to have been a cry-to-arms in the medieval period). At least the parish church stands on the site of its medieval predecessor, and is a convenient starting point in attempting to summarise the evidence on the burgh's various non-domestic buildings and structures. These will be considered in groups appropriate to the conjectured stages in the development of the burgh in which they originated.

#### Pre-burghal period

G.W.S. Barrow has suggested that the erection of Dumfries into a burgh of the king was made possible by William I's taking of Lower Nithsdale into his own hand, as an escheat on the death of Radulf son of Dunegal, lord of Strathnith, who had held it up to the end of the reign of the previous king Malcolm IV (1153-1165), and whose father had held it c. 1124 in the reign of David I (1124-1153) (RRS. ii 14: i 265: ESC. No. 54). The king's burghs were always planted on land which was part of the royal demesne, and this argument is accepted here. The fact of a grant of land by Radulf to the church of Dumfries (Reid Dumfries 134) must mean that the church ante-dates the erection of the burgh. Another charter by Radulf given 'at Dumfres' (printed in Reid Dumfries 217), suggests the prior existence of a demesnal centre at Dumfries (i.e. a hall or motte and possibly a settlement), ~~and~~ and the mention of an old fortification (*vetus castellarium*) in a charter of William I, granted probably in 1179 (RRS. ii No. 216), suggests that there may have been some form of stronghold as a landmark to the south of the church, before the burgh was founded (see p.78 ).

#### a. The parish church

This is on the southern outskirts of the town and on the eastern side of the road leading south after it has crossed the Mill Burn. It stands on a knoll above the road, an outlier of the Craigs Ridge to the south, and is dedicated appropriately to St. Michael the Archangel. Its ancient cemetery

surrounds the church and enclosed an area of some two acres, up to the time it was extended in the nineteenth century. The cemetery is taken as a landmark in the charter of William I, probably granted in 1179 (RRS. ii No. 216). It also figures in a mid-thirteenth century court case (APS. i 97-8) in which the burgesses of Dumfries are shown as worshipping at St. Michael's.

It is interesting that in the sixteenth century the church was still surrounded by fields (Shirley Dumfries 11). This pattern of an older parish church standing isolated outside the king's burgh is found at the other two burghs founded by the crown to contain the south-west. At Lanark, probably founded by Malcolm IV in 1153 x 1159 (Pryde Burghs 9-10), St. Kentigern's church stands some half-a-mile south-east of the cross. At Ayr, founded by William I c. 1205 (RRS. ii No. 462), St. John's Church stood near the shore, outside the burgh. The explanation in each case is probably that the requirements for a permanent settlement were different from those for the siting of a cemetery and church alone, and that the land chosen as suitable for the laying-out of the burgh, happened to lie at some distance from the existing parish church.

The dedication of the church to St. Michael the Archangel might suggest that the site may possibly have had a pre-Christian significance, and there is a standing stone a little way to the east of the cemetery marked on the nineteenth century Ordnance plans. Charles Thomas indicates the find of a cross-marked grave marker from Lower Nithsdale which is of the earliest type. The distribution of this type he suggests gives a rough index to missionary activities associable with the northwards spread of Irish-based monasticism, mainly in the seventh and eighth centuries (Thomas North Britain 124-5 and Fig. 60). The road southward past St. Michael's was described in the twelfth century as leading to the church of St. Blaen (Reid Dumfries 134). It may well be that the ceme-

tary and church-site at Dumfries are of a very considerable antiquity.

The ancient diocese of the bishops of Glasgow was revived by David as Earl, and the deanery of Nithsdale, as part of this, must subsequently have been firmly organised on a regular parochial basis, in contrast to the land to the west of the River Nith, which lay in Galloway and in the diocese of Whithorn owing obedience to the see of York. Malcolm IV's campaigns in Galloway 1160-65 were presumably mounted from Nithsdale and may have occasioned the increase in the endowment of St. Michael's signified by the grant of land by Radulf which is said to have been made circa 1160 (Reid Dumfries 134).

The church continued to serve the parish of Dumfries of which the medieval burgh formed only a part. The first mention of Dumfries as a burgh is in the charter of William I granting this church and its lands to Kelso Abbey in 1183 x 1188 which also states that he had previously given five acres of arable to the church (RRS. ii No. 254). In 1195 William I confirmed to Kelso Abbey the concessions made to it by Jocelin, Bishop of Glasgow, among which was that concerning the church of Dumfries (RRS. ii No. 379). There is also a strong presumption that the church had existed before William I took the area into his own hand, from the subsequent dispute, which Truckell dates to c. 1200 (Truckell Summary pt. 1 p. i) when Kelso Abbey conceded to Randolph, Dean of Dumfries, that his nephew Martin the clerk should have for twenty marks the Church and the chapels in the burgh and castle of Dumfries, on the understanding that the Dean should give up certain charters granting him the patronage of the church at Dumfries. (Kelso Liber 260-1: Reid Dumfries 134). It seems likely that William I may have granted the church at Dumfries to Kelso Abbey in ignorance of these previous charters regarding the church and its lands, which were presumably granted by Radulf son of Dunegal, or by his father.

A succession of vicars served the church in the middle ages and in the early sixteenth century there were eight altars in the church, many being chantries founded by burgesses (Reid Dumfries 137-8; Cowan Med. Parishes 50). Although altered to suit protestant worship the church survived until it was pulled down in 1744. The present church was built on the same site in 1746, with a new spire.

b. Old Fortifications

The place-name Dumfries derives from Gaelic Dun-phreas 'fort of the copses' or Dun -phris 'fort of the copse'. There is a parallel tradition at least since the fourteenth century of spelling the name as Drumfries, which W.F.H. Nicolaisen suggests must have originally referred to some kind of elevation nearby ( dronn Gael. 'hump': Druim Gael. 'ridge') which appears to have been called 'copse ridge' or 'copse hump'. In all forms, the second element of the name could be singular or plural (Nicolaisen Town Names 85). The question arises, where was this fort? It was presumably a form of hillfort, that is an earthwork-enclosure of ditches and banks constructed for communal protection of people and cattle on a suitable site. In comparison to the area required for the normal small motte-and-bailey castle, first introduced into the south-west by the Anglo-Norman barons invited to settle there during the twelfth century, the native hillfort usually required a considerably larger area, and the choice of suitable sites in the vicinity of Dumfries must have been limited.

There is in fact such a hillfort at Camp Hill, Trohoughton (O.S. grid ref. NX996727), situated on the crest of the Craigs Ridge at an elevation of some 300 feet, about two and a half miles to the south-east of the town. It is described by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments (RCAHM Dumfriesshire 51) as commanding extensive prospects all round, and being roughly circular, the interior measuring 189 feet by 198 feet. However, this inhospitable site appears



to be too far from the town to explain the continued association of the place-name Dumfries with the site of the town. There could possibly have been a movement of the peoples from <sup>oh</sup>Troughton Camp to the lower and more congenial site of the town, in the same way that the Votadini are thought to have come down from the native oppidum on Traprain Law to occupy the defensible site of Edinburgh (Dun Eideann Gael. for 'the fortress Eidyn'. Nicolaisen Town Names 88-9). In any case it seems likely that the fort must have been on the eastern side of the river in the vicinity of the present town.

The site of Castledykes (NX 977747) about a mile to the south of the town is an attractive possibility since it seems to have had a natural eminence of rock, the 'paradise', overlooking the lowest ford on the Nith, with an extensive area alongside at about 50 feet above sea level. The site was investigated by the Royal Commission (RCAHM Dumfriesshire 49-51) which identified the mounds and ditches there as the remains of the medieval Castle of Dumfries, and quoted in confirmation of this a document of 1333, during the English occupation, referring to "the mote of the castle and certain royal lands of Kingsholm". Kingsholm is still the name of the riverside land next to Castledykes and 'Paradise' seems to have been converted into a motte. As considered for the building of a strategically placed military fortress the site is ideal, but considered for the siting of a fort for communal occupation and passive defence, it has many drawbacks. It is on the outside of a bend of the river so that the defensive perimeter would have to be mostly man-made and would be longer than it would be if either the fort stood beside a straight stretch of the river, or within a bend. The site is readily approachable from north, east and south so that there would be no main direction of attack against which the defences could be arranged. The field of view from the site is limited and it is overlooked from the slopes of Maidenbower Craigs to the east. This site was to play its

part in the defences of Dumfries once the building of the causeway from Cockpool to Bankend had made attack by land from the south by English forces a likelihood. In this context the motte and later castle at Caerlaverock, near Bankend, can be regarded as baronial castles acting as outworks or forward defences to the royal burgh and castle at Dumfries. For the site of the fort it is necessary to look closer at the topography nearer to the town.

Corbelly Hill (NX967758) is a large isolated hill rising to over 125 feet close to the river and presumably would have made an excellent site for a hillfort, with good visibility all round. However it is on the west side of the River Nith, which here divided Galloway from the rest of Scotland and this is a very ancient political boundary. The hill stands in what must have been alien territory. Opposite this hill, however, stands the site of the present town of Dumfries, a plateau at about 50 feet above sea level, and on the east side of the river.

From Figure 8 (opposite page 41) it can be seen that the town occupies a site within a bend of the river, which protects it on the north and west. The site was formerly cut off on the east and south by the marshes through which flowed the Loreburn and the Millburn (Shirley Dumfries map frontispiece). The site could be approached only from the north-east by a route traversing the gravel ridges between riverine marshes and the Lochar Moss, or by fords across the river on the west (see above p.44). The highest ground within this quite large area, lies along the northern edge where a high bluff overlooks the river and rises to 75 feet in a small hill closing the gap between a formerly marshy hollow and the river, in the extreme north-east corner. The ground falls away considerably to the west and south, and the low-lying Mill-hole would have to be traversed before reaching the rising ground of the Craigs Ridge to the south.

It seems most likely that the fort indicated in the place-name Dumfries, might well have lain at the higher, northern end of the site of the present old town. It would thus be a promontory fort with natural defences to west and north (the river), and to the east (a bog). The only man-made defences would probably be those needed to cut off the higher northern edge of the site from the lower slopes to the south, to provide a manageable size of enclosure on the higher ground. It presumably included the small hill in the north-east as a citadel or look-out commanding views in all directions. This hypothesis needs to be checked by archaeological investigation, since any defensive line running east-west would probably have been obscured by the development of the later town. It may be significant that the early burgh was laid out on the hill-slope to the south, and a belt of land across the northern part of the burgh, corresponding generally to the area hypothetically occupied by the suggested fort, was tenurially separate from the rest of the burgh in the medieval period. Land in it was held by normal feudal tenure rather than by burgage tenure (Macdonald Royalty 343-4), and it provided a northern limit to the early layout of the burgh. A possible link over the chronological gap will be outlined in the next section.

c. The Mottes

A castle has been defined as the private fortified residence of a lord (Brown Castles 16), and it, and the form of society based on tenure by military service called feudalism, is of continental, Norman-French, origin and was unknown in Britain generally prior to the Norman Conquest in 1066. The very few castles existing by this date had been built by French favourites of Edward the Confessor as the legal and administrative centres of their fiefs in the Welsh borders. It became the typical Anglo-Norman device for establishing control over land, and in borderlands of extending the power of the crown through imposing feudal tenure. In Scotland monarchs from David I (1124-53) onwards, encouraged the settlement of barons

from England, or directly from France and Flanders, as a policy to bring the government of Scotland into line with that of more developed states. Grant G. Simpson and Bruce Webster have compared the charter evidence and the distribution of known mottes (a motte is the remaining mound of a motte-and-bailey castle) in Scotland, and suggest that in peripheral regions such as the south-west, the distribution of mottes shows an infiltration of alien Anglo-Norman settlers encouraged by the kings of Scots, which is not detectable to the same extent in the few surviving documents (Simpson and Webster Mottes in Scot.). David's successor Malcolm IV (1153-65) may have intensified this feudal settlement when he subdued Galloway in a series of expeditions between 1160 and 1165, so that in the Galwegian revolt of 1174 it is reported that 'all the defences and castles (munitiones et castella) which the king of Scotland had established in their land they besieged, captured and destroyed' (Anderson Annals 256). After the warfare of 1185 Roland, the penultimate native lord of Galloway, was reported as himself erecting castles and numerous defences (castella et munitiones quam plures) (Anderson Annals 288).

In the first half of the twelfth century Nithsdale emerges in the historical record as an independent native lordship on the eastern border of Galloway ruled by Dunegal Lord of Strathnith or Nithsdale (ESC No 54), and acting as a native buffer-state friendly to, and presumably acknowledging the sovereignty of, the kings of Scots. The lordship was centred at Morton (NX891992) in the Thornhill Basin of Upper Nithsdale some fourteen miles to the north of Dumfries, according to McDowall (<sup>History</sup> 3rd. ed. 16-17) following the tradition recorded by Grose (Antiquities i, 148). It seems likely that Dumfries may have at least acted as the demesnal centre for Lower Nithsdale since, on the partition of Nithsdale at the death of Dunegal, Radulf the senior brother took Dumfries as the centre of his lands. Upper Nithsdale went to his brother Duvenald, and the youngest brother Gillepatric was provided

for by land in Glencairn (RRS. ii. No 367). It is significant that among the few properly authenticated mottes in Dumfriesshire (Stell Mottes) are one at Morton (NX891992) and another at the north-east corner of the old town at Dumfries (NX973764) representing a re-shaping of the hillock there, previously referred to.

This is now termed the Townhead Motte, and it was probably built under Radulf as an adjunct to the older demesnal centre presumably occupying the ancient promontory fort on the higher ground at the north end of the site of Dumfries. If this demesne area was the normal residence of the lord when William I seized Lower Nithsdale, it would explain why the northern limit of the burgh-layout is so far south of the river, and why the site of the Greyfriars' convent at the western end of the demesne area was available as open ground when they settled there a century after the burgh was founded. Strategic geography seems to have compelled William to build his new royal castle at the Castledykes site to the south of the town, and at some date between 1299 and his death at Bannockburn in 1314 Lord Herbert Maxwell of Caerlaverock appears to have been granted by the crown the Moat of Dumfries. This, and the appended land to the east necessary for grazing and produce, continue through the subsequent history of the burgh as a compact holding of 260 Scots acres known as the £5 Land of Moat in the territory of the Burgh of Dumfries, and it was confirmed to Robert, Lord Maxwell as late as 1534 (Macdonald Royalty 344n.).

This motte was examined in 1915 by the investigators of the Royal Commission who concluded that it was a natural eminence from which a motte-and-bailey castle had been formed. The motte may have been very large and square in form having a base court attached (RCAHM Dumfriesshire 51), but the making of a garden and bowling green had obscured the layout. In about 1746 Robert Edgar gave the following description:



"----- the Mout or Moat on a precipice of the water of Nith on the north of the Town, on a rising ground conterminous with the street called the Townhead, artificially raised on that high ground, about sixteen feet high, on which three men may walk at a time, about fifty feet in length, the water having within these sixty years cut off the bank under the precipice about twelve feet of ground in breadth .....

It may be observed, if the Sovereign or Burghs Administrators would build for the defence of the Town upon the rising ground next adjoining this Moat, a Castle or Fort raising it so high as the half of the Edinburgh buildings on the Rock called the Castle, this building in a second or third floor would not only command the Town southward (the houses of the Town being generally two or three stories high) but defend three avenues, viz. North-Townhead, Lochmabengate and the Bridge from Galloway. And it may be remembered how much the inhabitants and their Auxiliaries in Octr. & Novr, 1715 & 1745 stood in need of such defences." (Edgar History 22).

This description underlines the natural advantages of the site but also shows that the twelfth-century earthwork castle does not appear to have been replaced by later fortifications. In fact a protocol of 1535 shows the hill of the motte (moit) at that date in use purely as the legal caput of the block of land, where sasine was given (Reid Dumfries 241). It is not mentioned in any of the circumstantial accounts of the killing of the Red Comyn by Bruce in the church of the Greyfriars in 1306 (N.B. Bruce took a horse to ride to the 'Castle of Dumfries' which he surprised and seized), and it is quite likely that the motte-and-bailey castle had already been dismantled before it was granted to the Maxwells; so that it could not become a threat to the royal burgh of Dumfries adjacent. In 1545 the 5th Lord Maxwell had built a new house in Dumfries, 'a fair house, battled but not strong' (Barbour Castle 188) but this, and its successor after it had been ruined by Lord Scope in 1570, stood at the western end of the site, adjacent to the Greyfriars convent. The New Church was erected behind this building, which was demolished before the church came into use in 1727. The present Greyfriars Church opened in 1868 stands on the site of the New Church.

Another motte at Dumfries, that called the 'Paradise' at Castledykes (NX975747), is well authenticated. This site was mentioned above with regard to its potential for use as a hillfort. In 1915 the investigators for the Royal commission reported that the small rocky eminence called 'Paradise' appeared to have been converted into a motte by levelling the summit, scarping the flanks, and cutting a trench between it and the lower area to the south-east. The plan is oval 76 feet by 44 feet with the longer axis east-west, and the adjacent plateau may have formed a base-court (RCAHM Dumfriesshire 50). To his seminal article on the origin of the burgh of Dumfries George Neilson added a footnote (dated October 1913) in which he described this motte as, " the mote of which about one-third still overhangs the road on the left bank of the Nith at Castledykes " (Neilson Origin 168n). It would appear to have been very much more formidable originally and was in a strategic position controlling the river, the lowest ford, and the road from the south. It was patently the nucleus of the Royal Castle of Dumfries and the motte may represent the first castle erected by William I when he took possession of Lower Nithsdale presumably on the death of Radulf son of Dunegal. The placing of this strength at the southern approach to the town suggests this later context, but A.E.Truckell has suggested that the motte may possibly be the result of a grant by the lord of Nithsdale to an incoming Anglo-Norman knight, in the same way the lord of Galloway was doing this to the west of the Nith (Truckell Summary pt.1 p 1). This is possible but seems somewhat unlikely since it is difficult to see what fief would be centred on Castledykes and, if such a unit of landholding once existed, why it has disappeared without trace. An exchange with the crown so that the royal castle could be established at the caput of this former fief would surely have generated some documentary record, unless another escheat is postulated.

It is very likely that the suggestion of an earlier castle at Castle dykes was prompted by an argument put forward by

Neilson to account for the curious term used for another landmark in the same charter by William I in which he refers to the church and its cemetery enclosure (RRS, ii No216). In this charter, probably of 1179, William I grants to Glasgow Cathedral and the Bishop the toft in Dumfries which is "inter vetus castellarium et ecclesiam, scilicet a castellario usque ad cimiterium ecclesie". The reiteration suggests a wish to emphasise that the whole of the land between the cemetery and the other landmark, the "vetus castellarium", was being granted. It seems likely that this landmark lay to the south of the church rather than north of it where the burgh was built on demesne land. Neilson translated vetus castellarium as 'old castlestead', and identified this with the Motte at Castledykes (Neilson Origin 168). He went further to assert that the adjective 'old' proved the existence then of a new castle which was the one referred to in surviving documents 'which presumably occupied a fresh site, not far from the original one' (ibid.). This argument has been accepted by subsequent writers who have sought to identify the sites of two castles to the south of the church and to suggest an historical context for each. A.E.Truckell's suggestion can be seen as a contribution to this debate referring to the old castle, as can A.A.M.Duncan's statement that this charter "is our evidence that two castle sites then existed ..... the new castle was probably erected before 1179" (Duncan Making of the kingdom 183n). If one examines the text of the document and then the topography, it appears possible that there may be a simpler explanation, which fits the facts more closely.

Firstly the document: the term 'castellarium' is unique in the Acts of William collected in RRS, ii. The normal term for a castle is castellum and on a few occasions oppidum. G.W.S. Barrow translates the term as 'fortification' and this may be a clue to the nature of this landmark. In the medieval period 'castellarium' seems normally to have meant 'the office,

service or jurisdiction of a castellan', (Latham Word-List sub 'castell'). This does not help to illuminate what sort of structure it was for which the scribe was trying to find an appropriate term, but it suggests that it was rather unusual and that it was presumably not a castle as then understood.

If one examines the 6 inch O.S. map of the area to the south of the church, there is an 'Earthwork' marked at NX984749 which on the 1st Edition of the 6 inch O.S. map is named as 'Kirkland Firs'. This is roughly the same distance from the church as the site of Castledykes but is in a much more obvious position sitting on the crest of the ridge at 225 feet on the north spur of Maidenbower Craigs. It seems much more likely that it was the ground from the cemetery as far as this obvious landmark which was granted, rather than ground stretching as far as Castledykes which is on the riverside, with possible boundary complications due to the roads running south and south-east through the area. There is some corroboration for this attribution from later practice, since what appears to be this feature, then known as "Kirkland Moat" was one of the boundary landmarks for receiving rents, recorded in town rentals in the 1520's and 30's (Truckell Summary Intro pt.2 p.1) and a sasine of 1671 refers to 'the ecclesiastical moatlands of Dumfries' which seem to be lands adjacent to Kirkland Moat (Reid Dumfries 101). In 1746 Robert Edgar named Kirkland Moat in conjunction with Corberry Hill as possible 'eminent hills or rising ground' when trying to make a case for Dumfries being the Roman Trimontium (Edgar History 20).

Of course even an 'old castle' would not necessarily have implied the existence of a 'new castle', any more than the new castle which gave its name to Newcastle-upon-Tyne pointed to their also being an old castle near the site. It would be a simpler interpretation if the vetus castellarium were regarded as being the ancient fortification known as Kirk-



land Moat, an obvious and enduring landmark. This would also simplify the likely history of the Castledykes site as being the site of a motte-and-bailey castle presumably raised by William I when he took over Lower Nithsdale and appreciated that the main threat would in future come from the south or from the river. This castle was subsequently elaborated by Scots and English kings, but this part of its history probably belongs to the period after the foundation of the burgh, and will be discussed later.

As a result of glaciation, Lower Nithsdale has a number of steep-sided rounded hillocks many of which with little alteration could have been adapted to serve as the bases for motte-and-bailey castles. After eight centuries it is not surprising that it is difficult to detect evidence of such use with any certainty. Whether or not a small hill should be regarded as a motte does not turn on whether the mound is artificial or natural, since it is unlikely that an artificial mound would need to be erected in a region with so many small natural hills of suitable shape, ready to hand. Where the traces of steepening and shaping of the mound and of ditching at the foot and round a bailey attached, are no longer discernable, and archaeological investigation has not been undertaken, it is necessary to rely on reasonable conjecture as to the possible purpose of a motte in such a position.

Geoffrey Stell has pointed to the relative profusion of mottes in Nithsdale reflecting a tenurial structure of small fiefs (Hist. Atlas Scot. 29) and indicates four mottes in the vicinity of Dumfries (ibid. map 22). He omits possible or doubtful identifications, and the four authenticated mottes are apparently those listed in an earlier publication (Stell Mottes ) ; i.e. Townhead Motte and Castledykes Motte on the east bank of the Nith, and Troqueer Motte (NX 974748) and Lincluden Motte (NX 967779) on the west side of the river in Galloway.



Troqueer Motte stands in the small settlement of that name near the bank opposite Castledykes, controlling the Galloway end of the ford here, which is the lowest ford on the Nith. Although in a strategic position the motte appears to have been created as the caput of a Galwegian fief. It should not be regarded as an outwork of the royal castle at Castledykes in Nithsdale. The feature of twin mottes as at York controlling a river, is a military feature implying massive financial resources and the defence of a great city. Such provision would be out of scale with works of Scots kings at Dumfries. Also it would not be appropriate there since the river itself was a political boundary and neither the patrimony of Radulf nor the demesne lands of William I extended to the west bank of the river.

Lincluden Motte stands on the neck of a peninsula formed by the confluence of the Cluden Water with the Nith, at about as far north from Dumfries as Troqueer Motte lies to the south. This again looks like the caput of an early Galwegian fief. It is associated with Lincluden Nunnery founded nearby and its function as a castle may have been short-lived.

As discussed above it is likely that the Townhead Motte started as an adjunct to Radulf's demesnal centre at Townhead, and was appropriate to a strategic situation where threats were confined to the north-east approaches to the site, or less importantly to the river crossings. It seems likely that under William I's reorganisation at Dumfries, the fortifications of the Townhead Motte were of less importance and were ultimately slighted before the '£5 Land of the Moat of Dumfries' was granted by the crown to Lord Maxwell.

With a change in the strategic geography of the area the royal castle was established at Castledykes south of the town and the motte there presumably represents the first stage of these works, which were elaborated in the century or so which followed. The transfer of the main fortification at Dumfries

from Townhead to Castledykes is such a sweeping change with tradition that it is only likely to have occurred at the beginning of William's seizure of Lower Nithsdale. The retention of the area of the old demesne centre at Townhead in the king's hands up to the end of the thirteenth century suggests that there may have been a hall there which was the traditional caput of Lower Nithsdale. Whether or not this legal function was subsequently transferred to the royal castle at Castledykes remains uncertain, but it seems likely that this would have been done before the '£5 land' was granted to the Maxwells, the caput of which was of course the motte.

There is a sixteenth century military intelligence report (printed in RCAHM Dumfriesshire 51) which states that (for that period's warfare) "The towne of Drumfriess is subgett to two lytill motes, one called Beakin hill..... the other at th' east gate, where upoune the lytill chapell standeth hard by the towne, but removable ..... onless in case of fortification, yt might for that quarter of the town be made a moute or bulwork". Beakin hill seems to be an alias for Townhead Motte and suggests that it may have been used at that time for a beacon.

The ambiguous use of the word 'mote' in this old report may explain why Mrs. E.S.Armitage in her pioneer work on early Norman castles in Britain stated of Dumfries that "Here there were two mottes, one being now the site of a church, the other, called Castledykes....." (Armitage Castles 320). It is most unlikely that the hill just outside the east gate was ever a motte. It was the gallows hill up to the Wars of Independence and owing to Bruce's brother-in-law having being executed there this function was transferred elsewhere and a chapel dedicated to the Holy Rood was erected by his widow and endowed by king Robert, on the hill. This is the chapel noted by the sixteenth-century spy and the hill was then called the Crystal Mount. In the nineteenth century

St Mary's Church was built on the hill and the remains of the chapel cleared away. This is presumably the church noted by Mrs. Armitage. The record has been set straight in a more recent general work, the gazetteer section of which states under Dumfries, "Two motte castle sites, much altered (Castle Dykes and Dumfries Academy) beside the River Nith." (Renn Castles 176).

A.E.Truckell has suggested that a mound on the west bank of the Nith close to the end of the Old Bridge may possibly be a motte. It stood on the northern side of the road from the major ford here, leading up to join the road between Lincluden and Troqueer along the riverside. This he has called the 'Old Bridge Motte' (Dumfriesshire Trans (1961-2) 90: Truckell Summary pt.1, p.1). A fortification in this position would control the crossing, but the fact is inescapable that it stands in Galloway. In the early period when the burgh was created the political differences marked by the river-boundary must have been at their greatest. That a normal motte-and-bailey was founded in this position as caput of a fief presumably including Corbally Hill is unlikely, since no such unit of landholding seems to be recorded and also because there are much more tenable positions for the strategic siting of a motte, on the shoulders of Corbally Hill further west. Any motte on this lower site by the river would be commanded from the slopes of Corbally Hill to the west, so that if there was a purely military strength sited at the western end of the ford it must have been a Galwegian stronghold facing east, rather than an outwork of Radulf or the Kings of Scots whose power was established on the eastern bank. It is important to remember that Galloway began at the Brigend o' Dumfries, and that as late as 1456 the Countess of Galloway could speak of the dues which "were wont to have been received by us and our ancestors at the end of the Bridge of Dumfries" (Truckell Auld Brig 1). If there was a Galwegian border-post on this site it could possibly have existed in times of peace, but in times of

war between those on the opposed sides of the river, the position would be quite untenable. In the military tides flowing over this part of the south-west which gave rise to the border town and royal burgh at Dumfries it is hardly conceivable that the Galwegians would have been allowed to build a motte commanding a major fordable crossing leading into the heart of the burgh. The balance of probabilities is against this mound being any kind of motte.

To summarise, Dumfries seems likely to have existed in the time of Radulf son of Dunegal, lord of Strathnith, as a strategically sited demesnal centre at the lowest fords of the Nith. It may have had the lord's household occupying a former promontory fort, on the high bluffs overlooking the river, which formed the northern limit of the site of the later town. A separate religious site occupied an outlying spur of the Craigs Ridge beyond the Mill Burn to the south. This was a cemetery enclosure with the parish church of St. Michael the Archangel. Probably during Malcolm IV's campaigns against the lords of Galloway in 1160-1165, the demesnal centre was strengthened by the formation of a motte-and-bailey castle at Townhead. As the site was accessible only from the north-east, where there was a route through the surrounding marshes, this motte was strategically placed. The mottes at Troqueer and Lincluden may represent the centres of fiefs established at this time as part of an early Norman penetration of Galloway, beyond the Nith. One of the first effects of William I's taking Lower Nithsdale into his own hand and probably the reason for his doing so, was his reorganisation of the site as a royal stronghold on the border of Galloway, with the defences being concentrated at Castledykes south of the church on the southern approaches to Dumfries and commanding the lowest ford. This was presumably the origin of the motte-and-bailey castle at Castledykes. The next stage in the development of Dumfries was the creation of the royal burgh. The evidence for the structures which would originate with this stage will be discussed next.

THE EVIDENCE ON BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES: THREE

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES: FOUNDATION PERIOD

The question of the range of non-domestic buildings and structures the origins of which one might expect to be associated with the earliest period of burgh-life at Dumfries, is but one aspect of a larger question. That is why in the twelfth century burghs were thought necessary at all. One's answer to this second question will go some way to determine the answer to the first.

The general lack of explicit documentary evidence on the reasons for the founding of burghs has led to various theories being suggested. Because he outlined a 'garrison theory' of burghal origins, in the first article of a series which he never continued, George Neilson has become known, perhaps inadvertently, as the chief proponent of this theory. In fact he argued only that local and temporary designs of the kings of Scots in Moray and the confines of Galloway in the twelfth century had resulted in burghs being created there, whatever the reasons for their survival thereafter. He states explicitly, 'It must not be supposed for a moment that this application of the garrison theory, as it is called, denies the existence of other potent factors in the making of the burghs' (Neilson Burghal Origins 136).

His argument was that the obligation of the people of an Anglo-Saxon shire to maintain the defences of the burh at its centre (burh-bot) was transmuted in the period after 1066 into the feudal obligation of castle-ward whereby barons had to help to garrison the king's chief castle in the 'county' where their lands lay, for forty days in each year (c.f. APS i 339). He suggested from evidence of castle-ward in Scotland that "Castle-ward is the tie of town and county — between county, castle and burgh — uniting these three in a single



administrative institution, of which the head centre is the King's castle of the county town" (Neilson op. cit. 131). He saw a nexus of burgh, barony, castle and 'county' and suggested a causal connection, with burgh-founding as part of a *modus operandi*, "...by incastellation the Anglo-Norman settlement and conquest of Scotland had been accomplished, and in the second half of the twelfth century its mechanism is seen at work in the subjugation of Galloway in the south and Moray in the north. Indispensible in the machinery, if not indeed the very axle on which the wheels revolved, was the burgh" (Neilson op.cit. 133). As a theory this argument makes some alarming geographical and chronological jumps, and seems to be reading back into this very early period the tidy equation of castle, sheriff, sheriffdom and head-burgh of the sheriffdom, which is first recorded rather later when already in full operation but which may be composite in origin through a new sheriffdom being based on an existing king's castle. He also suggests a closer connection than seems likely between the personnel of those obliged to serve castle-ward and the occupants of the nearby burgh who had their own obligations of watch and ward in the burgh. However, the general thesis of 'military policy' being a reason for burgh foundation at certain times and places is peculiarly applicable to the south-west of Scotland, and he is sound (if somewhat florid) when he says that it is clear that, "The burghs of Ayr, Lanark, and Dumfries, were frontier posts from which Anglo-Norman royalty and baronage pressed their sway south-westward upon the Galwegian, slow to relinquish the savage freedom he had inherited" (*ibid.* 135).

In contrast to this general theory of 'military policy', which has become an accepted part of thinking about Scottish burghs, must be placed the particular concept which Neilson said was called the 'garrison theory', as if he was not entirely committed to it. He regarded it as an application of continental theorizing and the central relationship implied

in the word 'garrison' he described as an obligation, called castle-ward and related to burh-bot, by which the landowners in the 'county' in turn served in the garrison of the king's castle next the burgh at the centre of their 'county'. He suggests that, "Castle ward paid in money in the fourteenth century to the Sheriff traces back to the service itself in its original form rendered in the royal castles by garrisons occupying by themselves or their families holdings in the royal burghs" (ibid 138). It seems very unlikely that a toft in the burgh went with every fief in the 'county' or sheriffdom, which Neilson implies, and the complementary relationship of burgh and castle, amounting almost to one of identity, which the 'garrison theory' suggests, is not born out in the legal and administrative arrangements which in all periods treat castle and burgh as being under different jurisdictions with the burgh enjoying its own codes of law. The leges burgorum (APS i 329-56) take it as axiomatic that the sheriff or castellan has no jurisdiction in the neighbouring burgh, and set down rules about the interaction of the two populations. Although there are intriguing questions opened up by this line of enquiry, it seems best to regard this particular aspect of Neilson's argument as not proven. To avoid confusion, his more general thesis, which has become accepted, will be termed the theory of 'military policy'.

The implications for the early layout of Dumfries of accepting the theory of 'military policy' as one reason for its origin as a king's burgh, are complicated by the likely prior existence of a motte-and-bailey castle at Townhead adjacent to an older demesne centre in what might then have been regarded as an extended bailey. Incastellation was the process by which royal power was extended and consolidated, but to begin with, William I may well have taken over the traditional caput and the Townhead castle as his base. At what date the new castle at Castledykes is likely to have been built will be a point to be discussed.

Adolphus Ballard, the exhaustive analyser of British borough charters, in an article in 1915 was concerned that evidence from Scottish burghs should not be urged against the garrison theory as an explanation for the origin of English boroughs (Ballard Theory of Scot. Burgh 26-7). He set out to establish what he regarded as a basic difference between burghal institutions in the two kingdoms, and argued that the essence of the institution in Scotland was that 'the early Scottish burgh' could be defined 'as the only place in which trade could lawfully be carried on or a market might be lawfully held' (ibid. 23). This he termed 'the commercial theory of the Scots burgh' and adduced evidence to show that up to 1571 'Scots lawyers consistently adhered to the principle confining all trade to the burghs, whether royal or of barony' (ibid.).

The distinctive characteristics of the Scottish burgh he suggested were that:

- 1) until 1571 the Scots followed the principle of confining all trade and all markets to burghs,
- 2) the King's charter was required to establish a burgh on the land of any subject,
- 3) in a subject's burgh the market was always a consequence of its foundation and not its cause,
- 4) up to the eighteenth century burgesses of certain Scottish burghs retained the monopoly of trading within designated areas,
- 5) Scots burghs were not walled and murage grants by the crown were unknown,
- 6) in the 12th and 13th centuries the Scots considered a burgh as a base of supply for a royal castle whose walls were repaired by the country people of the area.

Ballard's article seems to have been chiefly concerned to show the maximum contrast with the situation in England, and as a result over simplified the Scottish situation. George Pryde, when reviewing the evidence for the ultimate origin of the burgh in Scotland (i.e. in the time of David I) pointed out

that the tidy system described by Ballard was in fact slow in evolving and did not reach maturity until a general charter of 1346. For his own purposes he concluded that 'The statement that the market was the germ of the burgh is therefore not universally true, and is no adequate explanation of its creation' (Pryde Origin of the Burgh 275). He decided that the origin of the earliest burghs must be ascribed to the factors supporting the "garrison theory" (ibid. 283).

It is clear that it was the ultimate, earliest and exclusive origin of the burgh as an institution in Scotland which concerned Neilson, Ballard, Pryde and several others. The present study is concerned with the origin of Dumfries founded by William I in c. 1165 X 1188, and fortunately there is no necessity to come to a reasoned conclusion on this old debate. However George Pryde's article is helpful in that he distinguished chronologically between the predominance of military policy and economic motives in periods of burgh foundation. He considered that only in the reign of William I did the distinctly Scottish system of clearly defined and rigidly graded economic privileges take its rise, and before that there was a primitive period where military considerations governed the creation of burghs. 'Under William the Lion, however, the very success of the original idea meant the introduction of modifications, the return to the basic principle ——"let no man bargain out of port". The burgh might now be thought of as an incorporated fellowship of freemen grouped around the market, owning land in community, and bound together in common obedience to the burghal code; the characteristic customs and institutions of the medieval burgh began to take shape and to reach definition' (ibid. 282). Bearing in mind the period when it was founded but also the border situation of the burgh at Dumfries it might be reasonable to suggest that military and economic factors may have played an equal part in the thinking of those who planted and planned the king's burgh there. It is to the evidence for the structures or buildings concerned with the commercial and economic life

of the newly founded burgh that we must now turn.

### The Mercat Cross

The Mercat Cross was at once the symbol of a burgh's privileges and the lawful caput of the town. A burgess might have a charter for a house and plot but had to go through a legal ceremony of receiving earth and stone on the site as symbols of taking ~~possession~~ <sup>Seisin</sup> of it. In the same way when the burgh came to be held of the crown by the burgesses the Mercat Cross was the scene of the ceremony. In 1621 a writ for a royal charter by James VI read:

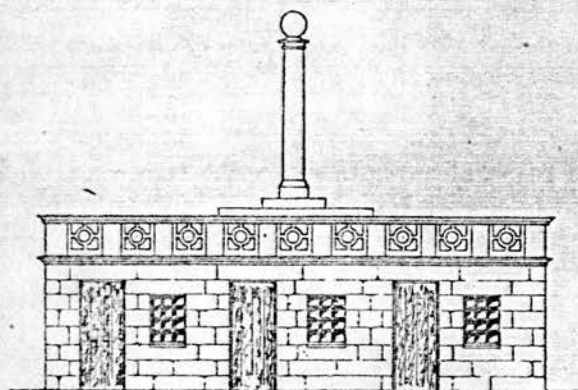
"that ane sazone of this his Majestie's charter be taken with the Provost and with the Baillies of the said Burgh, at the Mercat Croce thereof, be deliverance of ane golden penny with eird and stone, which shall be ane sufficient sazone" (McDowall History 2nd ed. 312).

The Mercat Cross is so much an essential element of a medieval burgh that it is fairly certain that it was the first structure to be raised there, and whatever ceremony took place to inaugurate the new burgh and formally confer its status presumably took place at the Mercat Cross. That at Dumfries seems always to have stood on a natural mound halfway up the High Street of Dumfries on the western side until raised up on the forerunner of the building immediately to the north of the site of the later Mid Steeple in the sixteenth century.

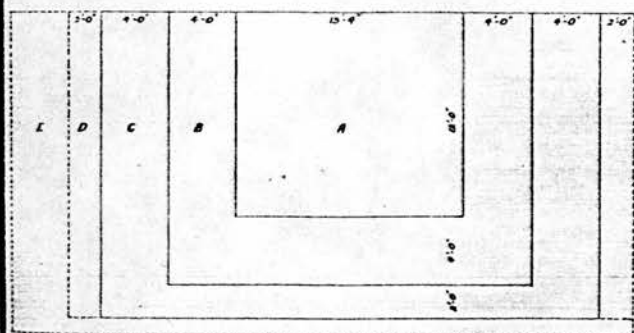
The Mercat Cross was presumably a stone pillar raised on stone steps. It is mentioned in passing when records begin. In 1479 a summons to Albany was fixed to the Cross (APS ii 127 : Reid Dumfries 136). In 1536 the Burgh Court Book laid down that peat-stealers should be branded at the Cross with the Tolbooth key heated in a fire made with the peats (Shirley Dumfries 50). In 1575 the Mercat Cross was decayed and fallen but the Town Council were in financial difficulties so they



MARKET CROSS OF DUMFRIES.



*Conjectural E Elevation of Cross 1576 to 1680.*



*GROUND PLAN SHOWING VARIOUS ADDITIONS AND PRESENT SIZE*

- A. ORIGINAL SITE OF THE CROSS
- B. RECTANGULAR ADDITION 1576
- C. RECTANGULAR ADDITION 1680
- D. RECTANGULAR ADDITION 1810
- E. PRESENT SITE 1810

Scale 1" = 10'

Fig. 11. The Mercat Cross.

feued the site of the cross with additional space adjacent to the highest bidder who was required to erect a new cross on top of the new single-storey building and to arrange steps to give access to it. In 1690 permission was granted to add a second storey to the structure and in these works the cross itself disappeared. It lived on however in legal memory since the Articles of Union were burned at the Market Cross in 1706 (NSA,6) and in the Town Council Minutes for 8th May 1827 it was reported by the Provost that on the 23rd of the preceeding month, a royal charter of confirmation of all the privileges, immunities, jurisdictions and customs pertaining to the burgh having been obtained, 'public infetment had been taken on the new charter at the market cross, a record of which would be duly entered in the registers of sasines for the burgh and county' (McDowall History 3rd ed. 712).

#### The Mill of Dumfries

The water mill on the Mill Burn may well have been constructed to serve Radulf's demesne centre and the rural parish around, but if not, it would have become necessary when the burgh quickly increased the population of the area. In 1215 an agreement between Henry Wytwele burgess of Dumfries and the Abbot and Convent of Kelso mentions the 'Dumfries Burn which falls into the mill pond of Dumfries (Kelso Liber ii 266).

Adam the miller figures in a celebrated lawsuit in c. 1260 (APS. i 97-8) and in 1549 the Town Council feued it together with its dams and watergangs. These latter are still traceable on the O.S. 25" plan of 1858. Presumably the mill will have been rebuilt from time to time but its position above the 'Milnhole' will have remained the same.

The simple layout of the burgh at its foundation will have consisted of its extensive open market place (with the cross on the west side) with long blocks of burgage plots along the eastern and western sides. The back-dykes of the plots in line will have provided an effective enclosure and roads entering the market will have been controlled by ports where

toll was collected on goods, cattle and produce brought to the monopoly market of the burgh. Each burgess was required to build his house on the frontage of his plot and so demonstrate his stake in the new burgh. The early development from this simple beginning will be the subject of the next section.

THE EVIDENCE OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES : FOUR

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES: EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Dumfries had its greatest prosperity during the thirteenth century and this section will consider buildings and structures erected there until the time of the foundation of the Greyfriars convent c. 1266.

St Thomas' Chapel in the burgh

The <sup>a</sup>charter of William I in which the burgh is first mentioned was one granting to Kelso Abbey the parish church at Dumfries together with the chapel of St. Thomas in the burgh with its toft (RRS ii No. 254). The <sup>chapel</sup>~~charter~~ dates from 1183-88, and from internal evidence appears to date from a period some time after the foundation of the burgh. It was mentioned again c. 1200 in a dispute over the rights of the abbey. There is no record of it thereafter and its site is not known.

It has been conjectured, but is nowhere recorded, that the chapel was dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury (Becket). If this were so then it cannot have been dedicated before March 1173 when the Pope canonised the murdered Becket. William I founded the great abbey of Arbroath in honour of St. Thomas the Martyr in 1178, so that it would be not unlikely for a chapel similarly dedicated to be founded in the latest of the same king's burghs, probably in the late 1170's.

G.W.Shirley noted that in the medieval period all the chapels were situated on the main approaches to Dumfries but went on to support the theory, stemming from the informants of the Ordnance Survey officers in the 1850's, that the chapel had stood next Chapel Street (Shirley Dumfries 21). This narrow east-west street bisects the large island block of properties in the northern part of the High Street and may earlier have

been called Rottenraw. Robert Edgar, writing in 1746, when describing the north-eastern part of the town, mentioned 'the Chapel hill, or old School-Hill' (Edgar History 21) and elsewhere mentions that the Town Schoolhouse had been until recently 'for nigh 200 years in Chappelhill' (ibid. 57). Taken together this could mean that what in Edgar's time was called Chapelhill had of old been known as School Hill (the School master of Dumfries is recorded in the 14th century, so that a burgh school need not have been the more modern institution) and that the chapel referred to may have been some post-reformation chapel of dissenters. Shirley suggested that a reference of 1508 showed the name Chapel Hill to be identified with this site (Shirley Dumfries 21) but in fact the reference is to a house 'super latis montis Capelle viz le Chapelside' (ibid. 43n. no. 48) which R.C.Reid has since shown to refer to the land beside the 14th century chantry chapel on Chrystal Mount (Reid Dumfries 116), which lies outside the town to the east.

It is quite clear from the layout of the town that this whole island-block where the site of St. Thomas' chapel was suggested to have been, is in fact a late medieval infill of part of the open market place of earlier times, so that it will not have existed at the early period when the chapel itself is recorded. It is most likely that the early chapel of St Thomas stood on a plot fronting onto the street, either in or beside its toft, and that it was at the entrance to the burgh from the north-east. The fact that it is last recorded at a time before the Schoolmaster is mentioned might possibly suggest that when the Greyfriars church opened c. 1266 and met the spiritual needs of those who had previously used the chapel of St. Thomas (it seems to have been a chapel-of-ease under the Parish Church) the chapel may have become the Burgh School, and relieved Kelso Abbey of its upkeep.

#### The Fish Cross

The extension of the market activity as the burgh prospered



seems to have made it desirable to segregate the marketing of certain more noisome merchandise, notably fish. Meal and malt were traditionally sold near the Mercat Cross and they could be easily spoiled. The junction of Lochmabegait with the main market-place is the site of the Fish Cross at its first appearance in the records in 1566 (Reid Dumfries 117) and it was presumably sited there on a convenient small hillock in the medieval period. Edgar reported that this hill had been levelled forty years before he wrote (1746) (Edgar History 21) and this ties in with the Town Council Minutes which record its removal from the junction of the Backrow (Queensberry Street) with Lochmabengait in 1693 (Reid Dumfries 10). Its new site was at the top of St. Michael's Street but in 1788 it was ordered to be removed "being a great nuisance" and was set up below the Mid Steeple (ibid.). Its earlier form was presumably a simple stone pillar with steps at its foot. In the more businesslike post-reformation period its latest form is said to have been a large round stone table on which the fish were laid out for sale, which was removed in 1831 (Barbour Market Cross 86).

#### The Tron

Another feature of the market place of a flourishing king's burgh was the tron or public weighing place. The Great Custom was payable to the crown on the export of wool, wool-fells (skins with the wool left on) and hides which was channelled through the royal burghs by legislation, and these were weighed and sealed by an official appointed by the crown. The Tron was useful to marketing generally and the burgh derived an income from its use. The customs due were trebled and then quadrupled in the fourteenth century to ransom king David II and the royal Council of December 1363-4 ordered that a tron for weighing wool should be established in every burgh of export, with a tronar, whose fee was to be ld. on each sack (APS i. 496: ER. ii, p. lxxxvi). There was presumably a tron at Dumfries, in its traditional position just north of the Mercat Cross, at the period of its greatest prosperity,

in the thirteenth century. There are numerous accounts recorded in the Exchequer Rolls following the Act of Council, which give a good impression of the nature of a tron's structure. On four occasions new trons were built, and on thirty eight they were repaired. Weights were provided on four occasions and lead and iron to make weights twice. Wood was provided for trons on three occasions and a great beam for the cross-bar, twice (ERii, 693). The tron seems to have consisted of an upright post with a swivelling wooden balance-bar with a pan or hook for weights at one end, and one for the goods at the other. To provide a Weigh-house was one of the purposes of building the Mid Steeple in 1704-8 (Edgar History 45) but it is not clear if the tron had survived in its old position and form up to its being moved inside this new building just to the south of the Mercat Cross. In 1576 a punishment of 'vacabund men' in the town was that they be nailed by the ears to the cross-beam of the Tron (Shirley Market Cross 201).

#### The Tolbooth

The word 'tolbooth' bespeaks an origin in a perhaps impermanent building where market tolls were collected. From an early period however it was also required to provide accommodation for a Council Chamber and prisoners. The records of Ayr show the court there sitting 'in tolloneo' (tolbooth, toll-house) in 1429 but in 1432 contributions were being made to build a 'pretorium' (a 'Town House') and William Croft Dickinson has tentatively suggested that the latter may represent, 'the growth of "town government", as opposed to the tolloneum where the tolls (originally the king's) were collected' (Aberdeen Burgh Recs. cxxv, n.). There was a Provost of Dumfries in 1288 (Reid Dumfries 11) and the lost Exchequer Rolls of 1291, of which only the headings survive in an English list of records removed from Edinburgh Castle, recorded the accounts of the burgesses of Dumfries ('homines burgi de Dunfres') (Reid *ibid.* 12). It is reasonable to suppose that Dumfries had a tolbooth during the thirteenth century at the

time of its early prosperity, and that the function of toll-collecting was as early allied to that of council chamber, jail and all-purpose public building.

In 1393 the king of Scots allowed the burgesses and community of Aberdeen to build a pretorium eighty feet long and thirty feet wide wherever they wished within their burgh save in the midst of the market (Aberdeen Burgh Recs. cxxiv), and the tolbooth at Aberdeen is still on the side of the street. At Dumfries the later tolbooth was on the market place (on the east side opposite Bank Street) and it is to be presumed that this encroachment was licensed by the crown, and that this has always been the site of the Tolbooth there.

To serve its additional functions a tolbooth had to be strong and from an early date consisted of a stout tower standing in the High Street. The Tolbooth at Tain is the nearest approach to the original form, having a stone tower with a stone roof (Lindsay Burgh Architecture 4). Probably for reasons of prestige as well as for security early stone tolbooths followed the tower-house pattern and the town bell was also normally hung there (Dunbar Hist. Arch Scot. 200). At Dumfries this early phase had presumably passed and the building for which Lord Torthorwald donated the bell in 1443 (Edgar History 32) may have approximated to the later pattern of a council chamber raised over a prison and approached by a forestair, with a bell-tower or turret at one end. The building is first mentioned in the burgh records in 1481 (Shirley Dumfries 49). It was possibly roofed with thatch since the Burgh Court Books show that it was slated in 1532 and had a clock in 1533 (*ibid.*). In financial difficulties the Town Council pawned "the haill Tolbuyth" in 1569 but soon redeemed it and ~~payed~~ <sup>paid</sup> off their debt by disposing of the Greyfriars Convent (Shirley Market Cross 205).

In 1579 a separate and more secure prison was built to the north of the Tolbooth at the order of the Privy Council

(Shirley Dumfriés 50n, no. 74c). In 1704-8 the Mid Steeple was erected on the western side of the High Street just south of the Mercat Cross (by then a building with three shops below). This was intended as a prestige court house to be used by the Sheriff Court but also held the town's magazine (information from Mr. A.E.Truckell, 1978) and was designed on classical lines resembling the Tolbooth at Stirling designed by Sir William Bruce in 1702. Tobias Bauchop the designer at Dumfries is said to have been master-mason to Sir William. This building comes outside the medieval period and is not a tolbooth, but it has the appearance of one and is adequately described by the Royal Commission (RCAHM Dumfriesshire 48-9).

The Old Tolbooth by 1718 was reported to be in a dangerous condition and it was inspected. It had three storeys above cellars or vaults. The top storey was an open prison, the next the council chamber or Tolbooth proper, at street level were four shops and three vaults below them. It was decided to rebuild the wall facing the High Street but in 1719 demolition of the whole began. By 1725 the new accommodation on the site had been allocated, with the Council House raised above shops and approached by a forestair, with rooms for a writing school and other town uses above, and the town's magazine in the garret (Reid Dumfries 147-8). This was the New Council House but later became the Rainbow Tavern and the forestair survived until the 1930's as the "Rainbow Stairs" (Truckell Summary Intro. pt. 2., p.4).

#### The Bridge of Dumfries

The present Old Bridge at Dumfries, constructed from red sandstone, no doubt won from local quarries and possibly from Castledykes quarry, is among the oldest bridges surviving in Scotland. Even so it dates from the fifteenth century and the earlier bridges over the Nith at Dumfries must have been timber structures needing constant maintenance and renewal. It is presumably to the period of greatest prosperity of medieval

Dumfries that we should look for the first wooden bridge, that is to the thirteenth century. A.E.Truckell has suggested that the bridge may have originated in the 1260's-80's (Truckell Auld Brig 1) but unfortunately he based this assumption mainly on the likelihood of the attribution of the construction to Lady Dervorguilla first made by Robert Edgar in 1746 (Edgar History 53). In fact Edgar wrote : 'This bridge is said to be rebuilt by Dornadilla or Dornagilda, a spouse to John Baliol, elected King of Scotland, 1292, and daughter to Allen Earl of Galloway .... And it is a handsome Bridge, with a port in the middle of the river Nith(which is the march between Nithsdale & Galloway), which had till within these sixty years great Valves or Gates, which the Administrators have laid aside as troublesome. There was a toll or custom exacted for passing it, due to the Minor Friars of the foresaid Convent, as gifted by the said Dornadilla to them' (ibid.).

Clearly Edgar is reporting a tradition which assumed that the stone bridge itself was co-aeval with the Greyfriars monastery and that it represented a rebuilding in the late thirteenth century, of a yet earlier bridge. In a footnote R.C.Reid has rightly dismissed the whole rigmarole concerning this beneficent lady and he pointed out that 'proof is still wanting that Dervorgilla had anything to do with either the bridge or the Convent' (Reid Dumfries 150n.).

What seems to be the best clue to the origin of the bridge lies in Edgar's assumption that the port (gate) in the middle of the bridge was connected with the fact that the centre-line of the river was the boundary of Galloway. The (presumably wooden) bridge is mentioned in a charter of 1426 by which Margaret Lady of Galloway gave in alms to the Grey Friars of Dumfries 'all and the whole of that toll and custom, which were wont to have been received by our ancestors and us at the end of the Nith Bridge of Dumfries (Bryce Greyfriars ii, 101). The grant was confirmed in exactly the same terms (apart



from it then being of the whole toll and custom with their pertinents) by the last Earl of Douglas in 1453 (ibid. 102) at a time when we know from other evidence that the bridge had been under reconstruction in stone since c. 1431, yet this fact is not mentioned or reflected in the text of the charter. Despite the assumption by Bryce in his heading to the first charter (ibid, 101) it would seem that what were granted were not the "toll dues of the Bridge of Dumfries" but the toll and custom dues on goods, produce and animals entering Galloway, and these were collected at the (western) bridge end of the Nith Bridge at Dumfries.

Traditionally Galloway is said to begin at the brig end o' Dumfries and these early charters bear this out. What then of the notional boundary line down the middle of the Nith and of the port on the Bridge? As a century or more of haggling over the Channel Tunnel have demonstrated, it is very difficult to get agreement on shared costs by different riparian owners. Most bridges, where the river forms an administrative boundary, are a result of extended negotiations and lead to constant differences over maintenance. Who then was responsible for the major investment of resources in building the bridge over the Nith? The answer may lie in the fact that the Douglas Lords of Galloway themselves had to render to the crown annually a red rose at the Bridge of Dumfries as did the McCullochs of Kirkmabreck (Reid Dumfries 151). This must mean that the bridge was regarded as a man-made peninsula of crown property projecting out from the crown demesne land of Dumfries, hence the fact that Galloway only began at the extremity of the bridge rather than in the middle. The conclusion must be that it was built by the crown and was either recorded in the lost Exchequer Rolls for the period before 1328, or was built before the records began. A major expenditure of this sort would fairly certainly be recorded in the returns at the Exchequer so it may be assumed that the bridge was built, presumably in timber, before 1328.

For the later stone bridge there is more evidence. A Papal Relaxation of 1432 is quite specific. It granted during the following twenty years, its benefits, to those who visited and gave alms towards the building of the bridge which had been recently begun over the river Nyth near the Burgh of Dumfries in the diocese of Glasgow by the burgesses and inhabitants of those parts, and also for the amplification of the chapel of St. Mary the Virgin founded near the said bridge (Bliss Cal. Papal Reg. viii, 347 : RCAHM Dumfriesshire 52). The burgesses of the king's burgh were no doubt the prime movers in this, and they will have gained an income from those crossing the bridge westward, gathered at the Bridge port in the middle. This will also have acted as a place for collecting dues from those coming eastward to the market in Dumfries, i.e. as an outer port to that at the foot of Friars Vennel.

When James II passed through Dumfries to crush the Douglasses in 1455 he took in hand the building works of the bridge and appointed Master John Oliver Vicar of Kirkbean to oversee the works which seem to have been completed by 1465 (ER vi 138, vii 298, 372). By 1522 the burgh had a Brig maister to look after the works on the bridge.

In 1621 five of its nine arches were swept away but the bridge was repaired at the expense of the burgh. In c. 1806 the eastern three arches were removed to create New Bridge Street between the end of the New Bridge and Whitesands.

#### The Greyfriars

The Franciscan (Grey) Friars, had their church buildings and yards in a rectangular stone enclosure with its southern side forming the north side of Friars Vennel. The church was entered by a narrow walled passage from that street and they had a private entrance in the western side of the enclosure which involved going up steps due to the higher level of the

ground inside the walls, built up on the slope. Most of the information about the Greyfriars buildings comes from the leases they gave of their property during the later sixteenth century, and so may not represent the arrangement in the thirteenth century, but continuity may be assumed in the absence of evidence.

The Friars Minor probably entered Scotland in 1231 and the most recent study of the evidence suggests that the Convent at Dumfries was founded in 1234-66 (Cowan & Easson Med. Relig. Houses Scot. 125). The latter date comes from an entry at the Exchequer of royal alms to the Friars (ER i 27) and this taken with the facts of continuing royal munificence and that the Convent was built on crown land reserved from the laying out of the burgh, but made available subsequently to the Greyfriars, may indicate that the Convent was encouraged or permitted to become established at Dumfries by the crown itself.

The Greyfriars were established well enough to entertain Edward I for several days in June 1300 and the church was the scene of the slaying of John Comyn by Robert Bruce on 10th February 1305/6. As late as November 1563<sup>some time after the Reformation</sup> the Town Council Minutes record an arrangement whereby the minister of the frier<sup>a</sup> kirk was to keep the knock and bell in use. The knock to be mended and set in order at the town's cost (Barbour Greyfriars 32-3). In 1564 the church was still in use for legal business (Shirley Greyfriars 330) but in 1569 the burgh was given a grant by the crown of the revenues and lands of the friary (Cowan & Easson Med. Relig. Houses Scot. 125 : Bryce GreyFriars i, 214) and the church and buildings were sold for the materials soon after. The site passed to Lord Maxwell who had his 'Great House' to the east.

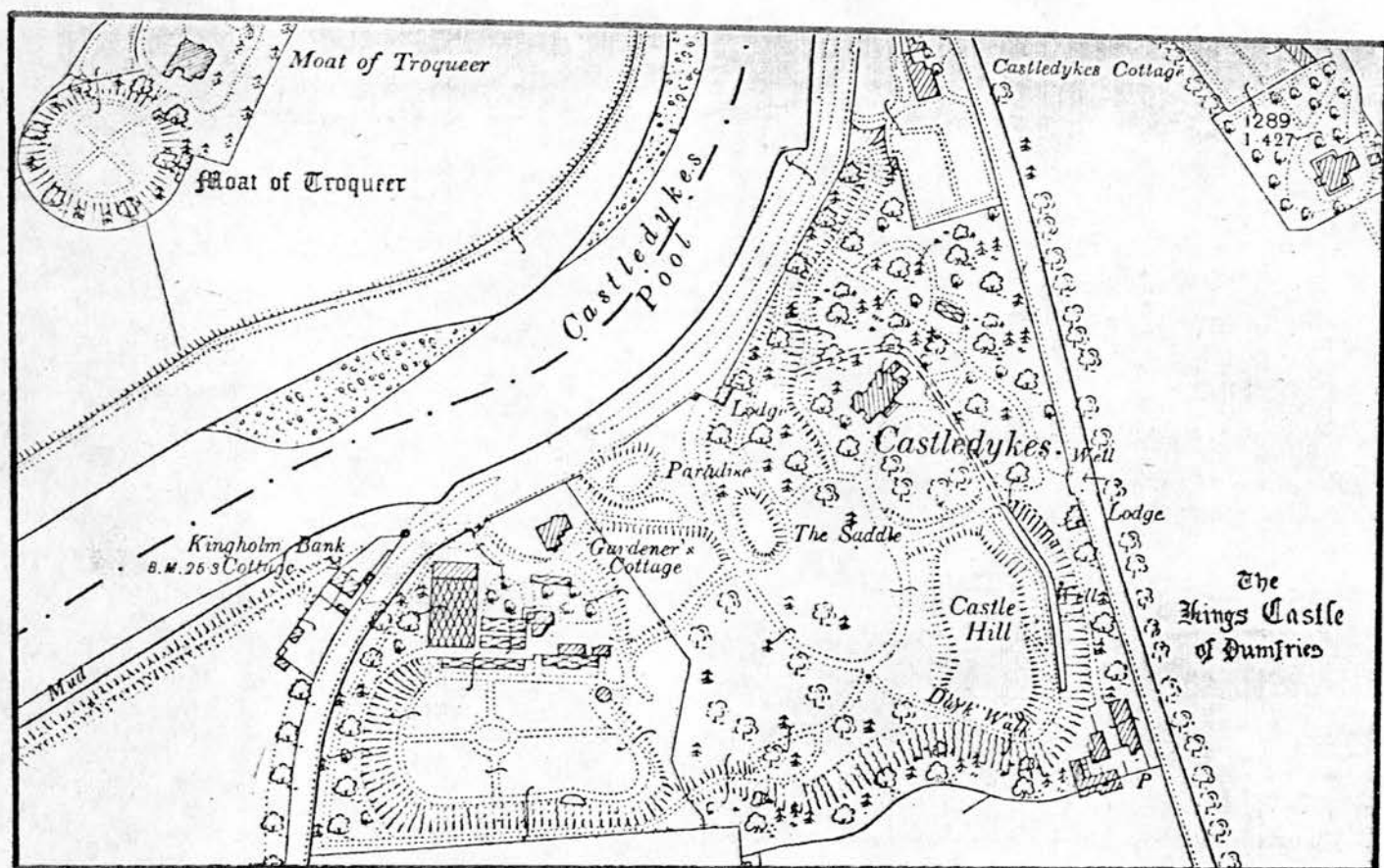


Fig. 12. Royal Castle at Castledykes.

THE EVIDENCE OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES : FIVE  
BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES : LATER DEVELOPMENT

This final section will deal with buildings established in the medieval period after c. 1270. The majority of the institutions of medieval Dumfries had already been established in the earlier periods but developments subsequent to these to meet the developing needs of the burgh were inevitable.

The Royal Castles at Castledykes

The site of the castles of the king, after the Townhead Motte was outdated, was on the southern approaches to the burgh overlooking the lowest ford out of Galloway and commanding movement by road from Bankend and by river from the Solway.

The hill called 'paradise' on the riverward side of the site is probably the early motte-and-bailey castle made by William I when he first fortified this site. It seems to have been replaced as the chief element of the site by a more elaborate masonry castle sited a little further to the east which had a chapel. This chapel is not mentioned among the ecclesiastical properties in the Burgh granted to Kelso Abbey by William in 1183-88 (RRS ii No. 254) but it is mentioned in a dispute about these properties c. 1200 (Reid Dumfries 134) so that it was presumably the subject of a supplementary grant when it was erected together with the castle between 1183 and c. 1200. In 1264 Peter the mason is recorded at work on the castle (MacGibbon & Ross Cast. and Dom. Arch. v, 524). This royal castle was one of the major strengths of the kingdom and in 1291 it was held for Edward I, together with the castles of Kirkcudbright and Wigtown in the south-west. In 1300 the English king strengthened its defences with elaborate timber



defence works ferried from Cumberland. This 'peel' took the form of an outer defence within which troops could be assembled complete with their horses and equipment. Moats were dug around the peel and castle to contain water ten feet deep and twenty feet wide, a new north gate was built with a drawbridge and an outer peel to protect this (Brown, Taylor & Colvin Hist. King's Works 411). In 1306 Robert Bruce took horse to the castle and sieged it immediately after the slaying of Comyn. When he took the castle again in 1313 Bruce seems to have slighted it so that it would prove useless to the English. In a revenue return for the castle and the land adjacent in 1335 there was a nil return, probably indicating that the castle had been destroyed. (Barbour Castle 49).

#### The New Wark

Lacking the protection of a royal castle, the burgh had a stone tower-house built on the market-place on the east side some way north of the mercat cross. A.E.Truckell suggested that this dated from the fourteenth century (Truckell Summary pt. 5 p.1). Robert Edgar described it in 1746 as 'an ancient great Tenement or Building called New-wark, lying on the north-east of the Cross, which had vaults or cellars, four on the foreshore and two on the backside, having four shops before, and dwellings and shops for Fleshers on the back parts, with many rooms and appartments, which are now thrown down and demolished ' (Edgar History 55). In 1764 the building was cleared away to create Queensberry Square (Shirley Dumfries 46).

#### The Maxwells' Great House

One of the reasons why the New Wark may have been allowed to decay was possibly the erection of 'a fair house battled but not strong' by the Lords Maxwell at the north end of the High Street and just to the east of the Greyfriars convent (Barbour Maxwell House 188). In 1545 the 5th Lord Maxwell had a new

house in Dumfries but this was cast down and the town burned by Lord Scope in 1570 (McDowall History 2nd ed, 291) In 1575 Lord Maxwell took a feu of the deserted Friars'yards and kirkstead and was living in a rebuilt and more splendid house by 1580, which became known as 'the Castle'. This suffered in the civil war of the seventeenth century and the site was sold by the family early in the eighteenth century. In 1727 the house was demolished in time for the New Church to be opened which had been built immediately to the north of it. The present 'Greyfriars Church' stands on the same site, and the Great House would have stood in front of it.

#### The Chrystal Chapel

The former gallows hill to the east of the town was the scene of the execution of the brother-in-law of Bruce, one Sir Christopher Seton, about 1306, and his widow erected a chantry chapel there soon after dedicated to the Holyrood. King Robert subsequently issued a charter of endowment in 1323 (McDowall History 2nd ed. 99-100). The chapel ruins were used for defence works in 1715 (Reid Dumfries 119) and St. Mary's Church now stands on the hill.

#### The Chapel of the Willeis

The Papal Relaxation referred to the above, for the purpose of aiding the building of a stone bridge at Dumfries in 1432, referred also to the amplification of the chapel dedicated to Our Lady nearby which was known colloquially as the chapel of the Willeis, from the willows planted along the riverbank to consolidate it. The chapel stood on the north-west corner of what was to be Bank Street at its junction with the back-lane now called Irish Street. At the reformation it went out of use and became a dye-house and tannery owned by the Rig family (Reid Dumfries 102). It will be noted that this chapel was on the route into the burgh market place from the ford and from Whitesands, just as the Chrystal Chapel was on

the main road leading into the burgh from the east.

The Sandbed Mill

The Town Council Minutes show that the Sandbed Mill, which stood immediately on the south side of the bridge at the eastern end, was complete by 1522 (Shirley Greyfriars 308). This water mill was powered by water from the Nith taken from above a new cauld or weir built across the river above the Stakeford. The water was conveyed in a 'water-gang' or mill-leat across the burgh's riverside common grazing land (called 'the Willeis') to pass under the eastern end of the bridge abutment and into the mill.

# HISTORICAL DISCUSSION:

## THE ORIGIN OF THE BURGH AT DUMFRIES

The extent of the surviving written evidence for the origin and early history of Dumfries was examined in section 4, and certain suggestions have been made as to the probable sequence of events while discussing the evidence for buildings and structures in section 5. It is now necessary to discuss the historical evidence available and to try to reach some provisional conclusions before venturing on an examination of what evidence can be provided by a study of the town-plan.

The currently accepted view of the origin of Dumfries stems from George Neilson's study 'Dumfries: its burghal origins' as published with footnotes in the Dumfriesshire Transactions in 1914 (Neilson Dumfries). The validity of his conclusions will be examined by following his argument step by step. It should be born in mind that this pioneer work was written about 1899, before the labours of Lawrie and later Barrow had made available the corpus of the acts of David I, Malcolm IV and William I (ESC: RRSi: RRS ii), and that we now have the advantage of sound texts, critical apparatus, and comparative material not available to Neilson in this ready form.

George Neilson's article runs to nineteen pages (Neilson Dumfries 157-76) of which the first section (157-66) contains a slowly developed argument concerning Galloway and its containment by the founding of burghs at Ayr, Lanark and Dumfries. The middle section of six pages (166-71) contains a closely argued case for the earliest reference to the burgh at Dumfries being dateable to July or August 1186, making use of annals and an analysis of four charters of William I and referring to one of Radulf, son of Dunegal, lord of Nithsdale. In the last section (171-76) Neilson sought to establish

from evidence for castle-ward in Dumfriesshire that the castle, town and shire were, 'in their initiatory developments inseparably interlocked' (ibid, 174) in line with the 'garrison' theory of burghal origins.

In the first section he defined a royal burgh in this early period as one often combining the several qualities

- 1) of being on crown lands
- 2) of possessing a royal castle (castellum)
- 3) of being a 'county' town, and
- 4) of exercising its jurisdiction over very wide bounds - sometimes those of the 'county'.

He felt that the first three were appropriate to Dumfries but not the fourth, in which it was similar to Lanark. It can be accepted that by definition the king's burgh at Dumfries stood on crown land, but the existence of a castle and of a sheriffdom based on the town-and-castle, while possible in the twelfth century, can only be demonstrated from documents of the thirteenth century. A chapel at the castle is mentioned in a dispute between Ralph, dean of Dumfries, and the Convent of Kelso in the beginning of the thirteenth century (Kelso Liber 324: Barbour Castle 50: Reid Dumfries 134). The road leading to the castle is mentioned in an agreement of 1215 between the Abbot and Convent of Kelso and Henry Wytwele, burgess of Dumfries (Kelso Liber ii 266: Pryde Dumfries. Burghs 84: Barbour Castle 49). The nature of the vetus castellarium mentioned in a charter of William I of 1179 X 1185 (RRS ii No. 216) will be examined when that document comes to be dealt with. A sheriff of Dumfries is first recorded in 1237 (Melrose Liber No 206: Fife Ct. Bk. 361-2).

Neilson discussed the clear evidence for the building of a new castle and a new burgh at Ayr (see p. 21 above) and dismissed the suggestion that mention of a new castle implies the existence of an old one, stating that, 'No proof of such an earlier castle exists, and the verbal argument by itself is useless' (Neilson Dumfries 161). He compared the earlier



case of Lanark with that of Ayr and then proceeded to consider Dumfries. He touched on the nub of the problem of the dating of the origin of the burgh when he wrote that ' We do not know how the property at Dumfries came to be the King's, but certainly under William the Lion, the King's it was. However this may have happened, it is the fact which is of chief account' (ibid. 162). The fact of crown ownership of this part of Nithsdale ensured that the requirement that the new burgh of Dumfries should be located on crown territory was met, but knowledge of the likely date and circumstances of the transfer from the previous owner, could provide a helpful start in erecting a chronological framework for these events. Neilson did not attempt to do so at this stage of the argument but others have made relevant suggestions.

G.W.S. Barrow in the introduction to his edition of the Acts of William I has suggested that it was, 'The timely death' of the lord of Nithsdale (Strathnith), Radulf son of Dunegal which, 'Enabled the king to seize this strategically important valley as an escheat and to retain for the crown the river-crossing and strong point of Dumfries, where William evidently founded a castle-burgh settlement.....' (RRS ii 14). This valuable suggestion would explain the means by which the territory came to be crown land. Barrow dates the death of Radulf to about 1185, apparently on the basis of Neilson's article with its claim that the first reference to Dumfries as a burgh is dateable to 1186 (RRS ii 289n), but there is evidence to suggest that his death may possibly have taken place twenty years earlier than 1185, and with it the probable transfer of lower Nithsdale to the crown.

The last occasion when Radulf son of Dunegal appeared on record was as a witness at Jedburgh to what appears to have been the last charter of Malcolm IV (RRS i No 265). This is dateable to 28th March X 9th December 1165, and Radulf does not figure in any of the charters of William I who succeeded on 9th December 1165 and reigned until 1214 (Powicke and

Fryde Brit. Chron. 55). This record shows that Radulf was alive in 1165, but to strengthen the likelihood that he died soon after, the negative evidence from the reign of William I can be contrasted with evidence for his regular appearance in the charters of David I and Malcolm IV. This suggests that he would presumably have figured in the charters of William I had he been alive. The relations between the lords of Nithsdale and successive kings of Scots are illuminated by the evidence from the charters and an understanding of these is helpful to establishing both the probable date of the death of Radulf, and the course of events leading up to the founding of the burgh.

A.E.Truckell has suggested that 'Radulf was still a sub-king in the old tradition, owing shadowy allegiance to the King of Scots' (Truckell Summary pt.1 p.1) but this seems more true of his father Dunegal than what is known of his son. As discussed already in section 2, Nithsdale seems to have survived under a separate native dynasty as a buffer-state on the eastern flank of Galloway, friendly to the kings of Scots and supported by the crown. Dunegal made a single appearance c.1124 as a neighbouring landowner in David I's charter granting Annandale to Robert de Brus (ESC No 54). Thereafter he did not figure in any of David's charters, but in 1136 his sons Radulf and Duvenald began to appear together as witnesses to David's charters. It may be presumed that they did so as the joint heirs of Dunegal, who may have died shortly before this. Certainly it was during the reign of David I (1124-53) that the brothers succeeded to the lands of Dunegal, as in a later charter of William I (RRS ii No 367) there is mention of the food-render from the lands that Radulf and his brother Duvenald held, and the land their brother Gillepatric held in Glencairn (part of Nithsdale) in the time of David I. Although there are cases of Uhtred son of Fergus, lord of Galloway or Gilbert son of Fergus witnessing royal charters in their father's lifetime, the

formula in which the sons of Dunegal are named together as witnesses, with Duvenald always in an inferior role — "Radulf son of Dunegal and Duvenald his brother" — in three of the four charters of David I which Radulf witnessed, suggests that together they held Nithsdale and that Dunegal must have died before the earliest of these charters in 1136 (ESC Nos. 109, 125, 230 and Radulf alone in ESC No 189). The evidence is incomplete but the first two of these charters show both brothers together at David's court at Glasgow and at Cadzow in Lanarkshire, and the chronological spread of the charters, from 1136 to c. 1150 suggests that they were periodically at the court of the king. There is no evidence that their father Dunegal was ever present in person at David's court, and the attendance of his sons points to a closer identification with the aims of the Canmore dynasty on their part.

Under Malcolm IV (1153- 1165) Radulf seems to have been even more closely associated with the court. He figures in seven royal charters in this short reign, and when he is recorded as a witness he does so alone. Duvenald his brother is no longer linked to him by formula, and his absence is not explicable by death, since as late as 1161 X 1164 a royal charter was addressed to Radulf son of Dunegal and Duvenald his brother (RRS i 230). It seems more likely that his absence was by arrangement, possibly with Duvenald staying in Nithsdale while Radulf, the senior, was with the king. This would seem a reasonable explanation when the places where Radulf witnessed charters of the king include : Dunfermline (RRS i No. 138), St. Andrews (ibid. No. 174), Roxburgh (ibid. No. 195), Edinburgh (ibid. No. 254) and Jedburgh (ibid. No. 265). These show the lord of Nithsdale often far from home, and indicate a frequency of attendance on the king perhaps rather unusual for someone neither of the royal household nor connected to the royal family. It may not be straining the evidence unduly to suggest that this mute record of attestations spread throughout Malcolm's reign may be but a surface indication of a last-

ing regard for Radulf on the part of the king.

The strategic importance of the site of Dumfries, controlling as it did the fords giving access to Galloway from the east, makes it more than likely that it served as an important mustering-place and base during Malcolm IV's three campaigns against the Galwegians starting in 1160. This would require the close co-operation of Radulf and would have called upon the resources of Nithsdale to feed not only bodies but also the souls of men. Radulf is recorded as granting land for the support of the church at Dumfries about 1160 (Scots Peerage vi. 287: Reid Dumfries 134) which, it has been argued above, may represent a reorganization of the endowment of the parish church at this time probably with the encouragement of Malcolm IV. The king is indeed recorded as confirming to Holm Cultrum, a Cistercian abbey founded by David I in Cumberland c. 1150, a lease granted by Radulf son of Dunegal, lord of Strathnith, of the lands of Conheath and Caerlaverock (RRS i No. 267: Holm Cultrum 52-3) which lay to the south of Dumfries, an Act which might be associated with this period.

The fact that a grant by Radulf would be confirmed by the king, places in rather a different light what otherwise might be assumed to be the rather independent and almost regal terms of a grant by Radulf to another religious institution:

'Radulf son of Dunegal to all the faithful sons of holy mother church, greetings. Know that I have given to God and the poor men of the hospital of Saint Peter of York a part of the land of my heritage in Dumfries (Drumfres) in perpetual alms, namely two bovates of land free of all custom and service. Moreover I take the indwellers in that land under my firm peace and protection. \* Witnessed by Gilchrist son of Eruin and Gilcudbricht Brechnach, Gilcomgal MacGilbblaan and Uduard son of Vita and Waldev son of Gilchrist and many others at Dumfries. Farewell' (Charter Rolls. 35 Ed. I m.8: Reid Dumfries App. A, No. i : dated to the 1150's in Truckell Summary pt. 1. p.1).

\* phrase suggested by Professor Donaldson in letter 16.10.78



Here, and presumably in the other grants made by Radulf, we have the lord of Strathnith not merely, "Being influenced by medieval institutions", as A.E.Truckell puts it (Truckell Summary pt.1. p.1), but freely employing the charter-form like any Anglo-Norman incomer, making grants in alms to religious institutions in England, implying in their terms that he normally granted land with obligations of custom and service like any feudal superior, and having the legal power to promise his firm peace and protection to the men of the hospital of St. Peter at York. Taken in conjunction with the facts previously established of Radulf's presence at court on several occasions, and in distant parts of the kingdom, this charter strongly suggests that Radulf was the thoroughly 'Normanised' head of a native dynasty, holding his father's territory of Nithsdale jointly with his brother, from the king of Scots, on terms very little different from the terms by which Robert de Brus held Annandale immediately to the east, that is virtually as a regality in that troubled border area, on the edge of Galloway.

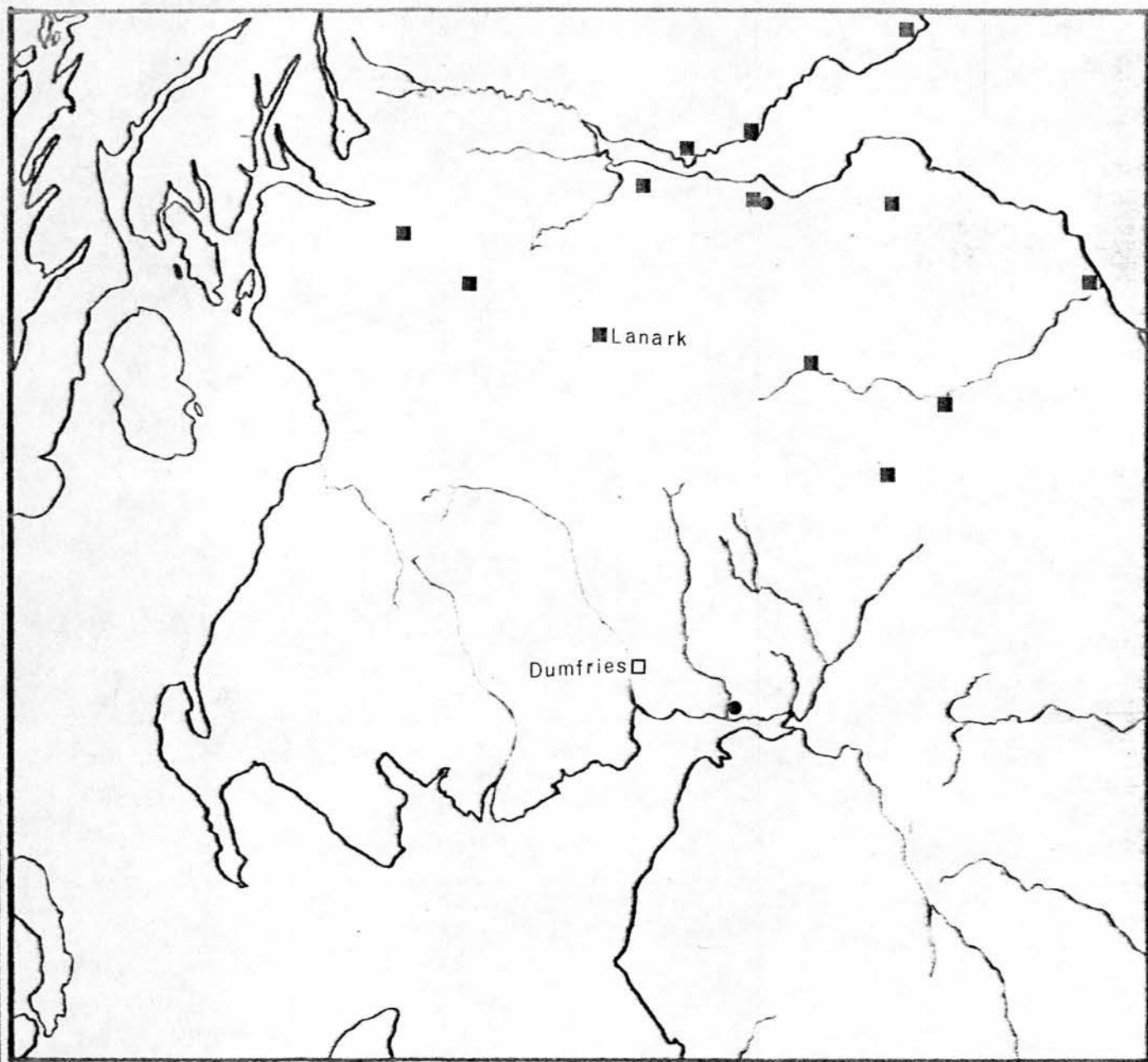
Two other points of interest arise from the text of Radulf's charter. Firstly it contains what is the earliest known written reference to Dumfries, and secondly the land given to the hospital of St.Peter at York is described as part of his heritage in Dumfries (*partem terre de hereditate mea in Drumfres*). This suggests that Dumfries at that time was the name of at least an estate. However there is some clarification in that the place-date of the document is "at Dumfries" (*apud Drumfres*). This must indicate a known and named place at which Radulf as lord of lower Nithsdale had his residence and in his own court with witnesses made this grant. This is the evidence for there being a permanent settlement at Dumfries during Radulf's tenure and, because he had it by inheritance, probably also in the time of his father Dunegall lord of Strathnith. In so far as Radulf had lower Nithsdale and was the elder, and his brother Duvenald had upper Nithsdale, Dumfries under Radulf may have assumed a greater



# DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

## BURGHES ERECTED BY 1165

AFTER PRYDE *BURGHES*



0 miles 50

■ BY THE KING

● BY OTHER LORDS

WAD'78

Fig. 13.

importance than before and it is likely that it was the legal and administrative centre of his lordship.

The nature of the permanent settlement at Dumfries in Radulf's time is not described in the documents, but they help to limit the range of possibilities by what they do not say. The status of the settlement would probably be less than that of a burgh, since this privileged status was a device of the king<sup>s</sup> of Scots usually restricted to their own demesne lands. At the time the licenced exceptions were the two ecclesiastical burghs of St. Andrews and Canongate and the baronial burgh at Annan (Pryde Burghs Nos. 82, 83, 84). A possible parallel has been suggested already between the Brus fief of Annandale and the native lordship of Nithsdale under Radulf, and this could be extended to suggest like origins for the burghs at Annan and Dumfries in this historically obscure period. On the other hand there is a telling difference between two grants of land in the territory of Dumfries, both made to the hospital of St. Peter at York, which would suggest that Dumfries was not a burgh under Radulf.

In his charter translated above, Radulf granted his firm peace and protection to those dwelling there on the land of the hospital. He did this without reservations, and his charter was given 'apud Drumfres' possibly sometime in the 1150's. In 1175 X 1190 William I also granted land in Dumfries to the same hospital (RRS ii No. 255), and he conceded also that all men of the hospital dwelling on this land were to be free of toll and custom in all his land, unless any of them were carrying on trade as merchants. This last clause was possibly introduced to protect the trading privileges of the king's burgesses especially at nearby Dumfries -- at that time the only king's burgh in western Scotland south of Lanark. The absence of such a protective proviso in Radulf's charter suggests that the burgh at Dumfries was first created by William I in or after 1165, once he had taken lower Nithsdale into his own hand, and that in Radulf's period of tenure

there was not a recognised burgh at Dumfries.

What the economic function of Dumfries was under Radulf and whether it was what we would call a town, are matters on which there is a lack of written evidence and which have not yet been illuminated by archaeological investigation. The geographical advantages which later aided the burgh in reaching a dominant position in the south-west were then present also to some extent. These were a reasonably extensive and fertile hinterland, a site at a focus of land-routes at the lowest fords over the River Nith and probable head of navigation for coastal ships, and a position on the borders of two regions contrasted in landscape, economic potential, products and political allegiance. If, as is implied by Radulf's granting his charter 'at Dumfries', it was the legal and administrative centre of his lordship, then the concentration there of dues and renders in kind — meal, honey, animals and whatever else the lands he granted out were useful for — as well as the produce of his demesne lands, would probably support a functioning market and seasonal gatherings of merchants and traders from further afield. In the last few years of Radulf's tenure the level of economic activity may have been increased to a considerable extent by the need to supply food and provisions for Malcolm IV's troops during his musters and repeated campaigns into Galloway. Whether the layout of roads, a market place, buildings and protective perimeter from this period has left any traces fossilised in the pattern of the medieval town-plan at Dumfries, may be revealed by an analysis of the town plan. If present it would presumably have formed an adjunct to Radulf's own residence, and probably would have been termed a vill or toun.

With Radulf's residence or demesne centre at Dumfries, in which that place-name mainly must have subsisted, we come to much firmer ground. Whatever may have been the burghal or proto-urban status of the settlement there under Radulf, the irreducible minimum, and probably the most important element,

of what was signified by his granting the charter 'at Dumfries' must have been an example of that pre-Norman form of lordly residence consisting of a great hall and other buildings within a defensible enclosure. It has been argued previously, in the section on pre-burghal structures (pp. 75 ), that this demesnal centre probably occupied the belt of land on the higher ground bordering the river at the north end of the burgh, and included the natural eminence in the north-east called 'the moat'. It is significant that this land remained tenurially separate from the burgage properties of the burgh during the middle ages as the more important part of 'the £5 land of moat' (Macdonald Royalty 343-6). It has also been suggested (above p. 73 ) that the reality behind the Gaelic place-name Dumfries, 'the fort in the brushwood', may have been an ancient promontory fort on this same higher ground on the bluffs above the river, and that the demesnal centre could have taken advantage of its ready-made enclosure. As late as 1676 there was an isolated length of ditch in front of the Maxwells' mansion-house called 'the Castle' at the head of the High Street (funda ante castrum) (Reid Dumfries 146) which could be regarded as a surviving section of an east-west defensive line defining the southern limit of the fort and/or lordly enclosure. There seems to have been an elaborate remodelling of this demesnal centre in the later years of Radulf's tenure. From its nature this was probably associated with Malcolm IV's campaigns in Galloway starting in 1160.

This remodelling involved turning the area into a typical Anglo-Norman form of motte-and-bailey castle with the moat hill adapted to form what is now called the Townhead Motte, and with the older enclosure presumably becoming its bailey or base-court (RCAHM Dumfriesshire 51: above p. 75 ). This castle was well placed for defence against attack from the north-east or from Galloway, but when William I had secured ownership he seems to have found it necessary to concentrate his defences to guard the southern approaches to Dumfries,



reflecting a shift in the strategic geography of the area. His first castle seems to be represented by the motte called 'the paradise' in close proximity to the later royal castle at Castledykes some way to the south of the town (RCAHM Dumfriesshire 50: above p.     ). The Townhead Motte and its bailey appear to have been retained by the crown up to the end of the thirteenth century, and were excluded from the area granted out in plots by burgage tenure when Dumfries was erected into a burgh of the king.

The probable nature of the permanent settlement at Dumfries in Radulf's time has been discussed as a commentary on the significance of the term apud Drumfres in his charter granting land in Dumfries to the hospital of St. Peter at York. This has served to establish the fact that William I does not seem to have had an empty nor undeveloped site to deal with when he came to create the king's burgh at Dumfries. On a hillock to the south of the Mill Burn was the parish church of St. Michael within its cemetery enclosure, which was probably more ancient than the church. On the high bluffs overlooking the river at the higher northern end of the sloping area limited by the River Nith to the north and west, and by the Loreburn and the Mill Burn to east and south, there was probably already a motte-and-bailey castle representing the latest transformation of the defences of this site which was the legal and administrative centre of the lordship. Southward of this the area to be occupied by the medieval town, would have been crossed by roads leading to the fords of the Nith, and there may already have been established there a market settlement.

In the context of what is known of the legal and political circumstances which would govern the acquisition of Dumfries and the surrounding territory of lower Nithsdale east of the River Nith, by a king of Scots in the later twelfth century, it has been suggested by G.W.S. Barrow that Dumfries was most probably taken into the hands of the king as an escheat



after the death of Radulf. This explanation accepts that Radulf's tenure was essentially feudal and emphasises the 'Normanised' character of this native lord who granted charters, was periodically at the king's court in distant parts of the kingdom, and seems to have had his headquarters at Dumfries transformed into a typical motte-and-bailey castle. It would seem that after the death of Dunegal lord of Nithsdale about 1135, David I and then Malcolm IV encouraged his sons to transform the friendly native territory of Nithsdale into a partially feudalised bulwark against Galloway, in a natural continuation of the policy by which David I had established Robert de Brus as lord of Annandale in c. 1124.

It is likely that Radulf's native background meant that he and his kin were sufficiently jealous to retain their heritage of Nithsdale that it would be unthinkable for Radulf to have handed over by amicable agreement the major part of Nithsdale to the king in a simple exchange for lands elsewhere in Scotland. The death of Radulf is the most likely explanation for the occasion of the crown's taking over of his lands, but Radulf's kin must surely have felt that it ought to have stayed 'in the family' and would have had to be persuaded that no other course was possible, before agreeing to the king's taking lower Nithsdale into his own hand. Persuasion could take many forms when a powerful feudal prince backed by a retinue of Anglo-Norman knights wished to persuade reluctant native landowners, but there does not seem to have been any history of subsequent revolts by Radulf's kin, who continued to hold Glencairn and upper Nithsdale (Barrow Cumbria 129). It must be presumed that the escheat was accepted by Radulf's kin and in this that they had accepted the discipline of primogeniture rather than insisting on the older native tradition by which an adult member of another branch of the same kin might have been accepted as the Lord of Dumfries. Under either the new or the old traditions it seems most unlikely that the crown could have taken peaceable

possession of lower Nithsdale if Radulf had had a son and heir who had reached manhood.

Radulf and his wife Bethoc are recorded as having given land in Ruecastle near Jedburgh, possibly part of a marriage-portion, to Jedburgh Abbey, in William I's general confirmation of its possessions in 1165 X 1170 (RRS ii No. 62). G.W.S. Barrow has suggested that the explanation of how Hugh Sansmanche came to hold Morton in Nithsdale and so was in a position to grant the church there to Kelso Abbey in 1173 X 1177 (RRS ii No. 183) was that he had possibly married a daughter of Radulf who brought him Morton as a marriage portion. If Radulf had had a daughter it is also likely that she would have been a great heiress and that Hugh Sansmanche would have figured as the next lord of Dumfries rather than William I. It seems more likely that Hugh may have married into the families of Duvenald or Gillegatric, the brothers of Radulf, which continued to hold upper Nithsdale.

Radulf had a wife and it seems unlikely that he had a son, so that it is difficult to know what to make of the statement by R.C.Reid that, "His son Thomas was sheriff of Dumfriesshire in 1237, and died in 1262, being the grandfather of Thomas Randolph, the famous Earl of Moray" (Reid Dumfries 217 n.). This seems to be based on the reference (Melrose Liber No 206) to Thomas Radulfi, sheriff of Dumfries in 1237. W.C.Dickinson notes this reference and adds that possibly he was Thomas, son of Thomas, son of Randolph (Fife Ct. Bk. 362n). He also suggests that he is possibly the same Thomas Randulphi who was sheriff of Roxburgh in 1266-69 (*ibid.* 362).

If it can now be accepted that Radulf was too important a personage to suddenly drop out of the historical record with the end of the reign of Malcolm IV, and that the reason why he no longer witnessed royal charters in William I's reign as he had previously for David I and Malcolm IV, was that he

must have died in 1165 or soon after, then there is a strong argument from simple chronology that Thomas Ranulfi was not the son of Radulf. Even if Radulf had married late and had had a son in 1165, months before he died, for this son to be identified with Thomas Ranulphi, a sheriff in 1237, the son must then have been a man of seventy two years. If he indeed died in 1262, at that date he would have been ninety seven years old. Besides having to be regarded as a case of unusual longevity, it seems most unlikely that the king would have continued in the fairly strenuous office of sheriff a man of such advanced age. On the grounds alone of these very special circumstances which would have had to coincide to make it possible, it seems fairly certain that Thomas was not the son of Radulf.

The note by Dickinson to the effect that there might be an intervening generation presumably arises from the text and nowhere does Dickinson seek to identify the Randolph concerned, with Radulf son of Dunegal. However if this suggestion is applied to Reid's statement, it would surely require Thomas son of Randolph to have been the first generation and Thomas son of Thomas to have been the sheriff of Dumfries in 1237, which was not the case. If this sheriff of Dumfries was the same Thomas Ranulphi who was sheriff of Roxburgh in 1266-69, then if he had been a son of Radulf son of Dunegal, he would then have been between a hundred and one and a hundred and four years old. As this seems quite out of the question it follows that for any man named Thomas Ranulphi to be proved to be a son of Radulf son of Dunegal, better evidence needs to be produced than that he happened to be appointed sheriff of Dumfries in the thirteenth century. That man may be shown to be an ancestor of the Earl of Moray, but the link with Radulf seems to be spurious. In short there seems to be no evidence that Radulf ever had a son, and every reason from the subsequent escheat of Dumfries by the crown, to believe that he did not.

In his article 'Dumfries: its burghal origins' George Neilson pointed to the importance for the history of the founding of the burgh to the fact that Dumfries was held by the king (Neilson Dumfries 162). How this probably came about, and the occasion of the transfer from the previous owner c. 1165 have now been examined, and something of the pre-burghal character of Dumfries has been discussed. Neilson went on to point to the many mottes in Galloway and Nithsdale and suggested that a motte at Dumfries and that at Troqueer were planted by Malcolm IV (ibid. 163). The reason why he indicates Castledykes rather than Townhead as the site of this early motte will become clear when the reference to a vetus castellarium in a charter of William I relating to Dumfries is discussed.

The absence of Dumfries and Lanark from a list of the castles held by William I and his supporters at the outbreak of war with England in 1173, is taken by Neilson (ibid.) to mean that the two places, "Were either unfortified or of no note as strengths, and were not yet established (on any permanent footing at any rate) as royal castles" (ibid.). The force and pertinence of this observation, with regard to Dumfries, will need to be qualified by the facts that the burgh at Lanark appears to have been founded by Malcolm IV in 1153 X 1159 (Pryde Burghs No 18) and that the erection of a royal castle was usually a preliminary to the founding of a king's burgh. A sheriff presumably based on the castle at Lanark is recorded in 1162 X 1164 (Fife Ct. Bk. 355). Assuming that the list was compiled on reliable evidence then it would appear that there could well have been a royal castle and king's burgh at Dumfries in 1173 without the castle qualifying for inclusion in the list of major castles. This might at least suggest that the later royal castle of Dumfries at Castledykes (as opposed to the adjacent motte-and-bailey castle represented by the mound called 'the paradise') should be dated to the period after 1173.



George Neilson's inference, based on the evidence of this list of castles, was that there was no royal castle at Dumfries in 1173 (Neilson Dumfries 163). He attributed to the period of the revolt in Galloway following William I's capture by the English in 1174, the erection of a royal castle at Dumfries and the foundation of the burgh of Dumfries, "-- the occasion of the burghal status to whatever in the shape of a village may have already existed there" (ibid. 163-4). He described how Gilbert lord of Galloway was brought to England in 1176 by William I to submit to Henry II but thereafter continued to raid eastwards and gave William I little peace up to the time of Gilbert's death in January 1185. Neilson referred obliquely to the founding of the burgh and castle at Dumfries when he wrote that, "History tells specifically of William's offensive proceedings: it leaves to inference the defensive measures adopted by him along what may be called the Celtic line, the borderland of Galloway" (ibid. 165). He went on to relate how there was civil war in Galloway in 1185 after the death of Gilbert, and how Roland son of Uchtred was victorious over Duncan son of Gilbert. Here Neilson entered into the middle section of his argument (ibid. 166-71) and gave abridged translations, and commentaries on, four charters by William I relating to Dumfries. He sought to demonstrate that all but the first charter could be grouped together and that their three witness-lists could be conflated to indicate that those personages could have been associated only in the unique circumstances described in the annals when in July or August 1186 Henry II twice dispatched William I to bring Roland to him at Carlisle and on the second occasion he came and swore fealty in the presence of many Scottish nobles and church men. The fact that Roland witnessed one of the three charters at Gretna, which is on the route to Carlisle, was given great significance by Neilson. Another of the charters contains the first reference to Dumfries as a burgh, and from Neilson's argument it has been accepted as dating from 1186. Even so the burgh may well have been older than this reference.



Before venturing on an examination of this crucial section of Neilson's argument it is worthwhile re-emphasising the fact that Neilson did not have the advantage of using G.W. S. Barrow's fine scholarly edition of the Acts of William I (RRS ii) with its verified texts and comparative information. However this modern edition still relies to a great extent on the grouping of documents by similarities of diplomatic, style, subject, script, place-date, witnesses or any other comparable factor, in the face of the almost general absence of absolute dates or where sufficiently close dates deduced from the biographies of the witnesses, or from internal evidence, are not available. Approximate dating by association with more closely dateable acts was still often the only recourse in Barrow's edition as it was in Neilson's article. The validity of an approximate dating by this method must still often be argued in terms of the likelihood of association by one set of characteristics as opposed to association elsewhere by another. Neilson could not have substantiated his conclusions by evidence from any one of his three charters taken separately or in turn. His argument relied on the presumed association of the three charters together as a group granted in specific historical circumstances in July and August 1186. If it seems likely on examination that one or more of the three charters were more likely to have been associated with other disparate dates and charters, then the whole basis of Neilson's argument in this section would be brought into question. The four charters discussed by Neilson will now be examined in the same order.

No 1. (RRS ii No. 189)

William the king commands his justices and other officers to render to Bishop Jocelin of Glasgow all his dues, whether in teinds, cain, pleas and profits or any other dues, as they were accustomed to render them to the previous bishops.

Witnesses	Richard de Moreville, the constable
	Walter son of Alan, the steward
	Walter Olifard

Robert de Quinci  
William de Veteri Ponte

At Dumfries.

This charter is dateable to 1175 X 1177 as Jocelin the Bishop succeeded in the former year, and Walter the steward died in the latter. The significance of the charter is that the place-date shows William granting the charter at Dumfries and presumably in possession of lower Nithsdale at that time. Both Neilson and Barrow agree in associating the charter with William's campaigns against Galloway in 1175 and 1176' (Lawrie Annals 205-6, 217) and Barrow suggests that it was probably issued soon after Jocelin's succession in 1175. Neilson suggested that this was the earliest recorded mention of Dumfries in connection with royalty. He went on to observe that, "There is no word, however, implying a burgh" (Neilson Dumfries 166). Since the only connection with Dumfries is the place-date, it is hardly likely that the status of that place would be mentioned. This charter neither proves nor disproves that Dumfries was a burgh in 1175 X 1177: it is silent and neutral on this subject. In Neilson's argument this charter stands on its own while the following three charters are assumed to be a group.

No. 2. (RRS ii No. 255)

William the king grants to the Hospital of St. Peter, York, two and a half ploughgates of land in the territory of Dumfries and Conheath (in Caerlaverock). All their men on that land are to be quit of toll etc. unless there be any of them that engage in merchandise as merchants. \*

Witnesses	Jocelin Bishop of Glasgow
	Richard de Moreville, the constable
	Robert the Chaplain
	Robert de Quinci
	Hugo de Sigillo and
	Richard de prebenda, royal clerks
	Robert de Brus
	Alan son of Walter
	Rolland son of Uhtred
	Walter de Berkeley, the Chamberlain
	William de Lyndsee

at Gretna.

\* phrase suggested by Professor Donaldson in letter 16.10.78.

This charter is not dateable more closely than to 1175 X 1190. Jocelin, Bishop of Glasgow was consecrated in 1175, Robert de Brus died in 1191 (RRS ii 290n), and Richard de Moreville died in 1189 or 1190 (RRS ii 113). Neilson suggested that the earliest date for the charter was 1180 but in this he seems to have been misled by the unsatisfactory list of Chamberlains in the second volume of the printed Exchequer Rolls (ER ii pp cxviii- cxxv). Walter de Berkeley was Chamberlain c. 1171- c. 1193 (Powicke & Fryde Brit. Chron. 177: RRS ii 33).

There are a number of points of interest in this document. It shows William I in possession of lower Nithsdale and, as has been pointed out already, the proviso against merchants carrying on trade may suggest that the nearby burgh at Dumfries, the only one then in south-west Scotland to the south of Lanark, had already been established, and that William was careful not to infringe its burgesses' trading privileges.

The fact that the charter was granted at Gretna near to the Sulwath or Solway ford on the route to Carlisle and England and that among the witnesses were Roland son of Uhtred and Jocelin Bishop of Glasgow together with most of the officers and clerks of William's household, gives rise to speculation as to whether there is a clue here to the probable date of this charter. George Neilson suggested (Neilson Dumfries 169-71) that the presence of Roland in William's train was to be associated with the occasion in July or August 1186 when William went a second time to Roland (accompanied by David his brother, Hugh Bishop of Durham and Ranulf de Glanvil the English justiciar) before Roland would come to Carlisle to submit to Henry II (Lawrie Annals 262-5). It is tempting to accept this association, but one must ask why David, the king's brother, did not witness the charter: when present he normally headed the list of laymen attesting. One must also determine

how unusual it was for Roland to witness William's charters. In fact the name of Roland son of Uhtred occurs quite frequently in the witness-lists of William's known charters. He was something of a protege of the king and witnessed a charter of William at Lochmaben in 1165 X 1173 (together with his father and Gilbert), at Haddington in 1180, and five other known charters within the date limits of the Gretna charter (RRS ii 179, 277, 293, 317, 322, 323, 365). As a justiciar and later as Constable he was frequently with the king. There seems to have been nothing very unusual about Roland's appearance in the witness list of this charter.

The witness-list is odd in another way. It is unusually long and seems to reflect a wish to impress in this way. In fact officials of the king's household who would not normally appear as witnesses seem to have been pressed into service for this particular end (eg. Robert the Chaplain and Hugo and Richard the royal clerks). This does at least serve to show that William at the time was in progress with his full household and accompanied by Bishop Jocelin and Roland who were often with the king. These circumstances and the pause at Gretna to calmly transact the business of his kingdom, do not square with the idea of a return from a second speedy embassy to Roland in Galloway in the company of English dignitaries and his brother David, none of whom appear as witnesses.

It is perhaps the association with Gretna which is the most suggestive point. Although this was on the route to Carlisle and England it was still a border settlement controlling the route into Scotland, and its strategic value may well have deserved the king's attention from time to time. It was also not in a cul-de-sac but routes from it led north-east through the border country, so that William may have been there en route to other parts of the kingdom. Even were William coming from Dumfries, as the grant suggests, and crossing into England, there is nothing to suggest that the



occasion was at all unusual, since he quite often travelled south when summoned by Henry II. The circumstances that the grant was made at Gretna and that Roland was a witness, even taken together, do not seem sufficiently unusual for them to be taken as any grounds for saying that the charter could only have resulted from the particular circumstances of July and August 1186. In fact the very normality of the charter would suggest otherwise.

No. 3 (RRS ii No. 216)

William the king grants to Glasgow Cathedral Church and Bishop Jocelin that toft at Dumfries which is between the ancient fortification and the (parish) church, i.e. from the fortification as far as the churchyard.

Witnesses     David 'my brother'  
                   Abbot Ernald of Melrose  
                   Richard de Moreville, the constable  
                   Walter de Berkeley, the Chamberlain  
                   Philip de Valognes

at Selkirk.

This charter is dateable to 1179 X 1185 but most probably dates from 1179 when three of these five witnesses also appeared among those to another charter to Glasgow Cathedral Church also issued at Selkirk and dateable to 20th October 1179 (RRS ii No. 215) from internal evidence. Philip de Valognes was a member of William's household and seems frequently to have acted as under-chamberlain (*ibid.* ii No. 254). Only he and the Abbot of Melrose did not witness the other charter. The only person in the witness list above whose presence requires any explanation is the Abbot. All the others were kin or officers of the king and were normally to be found at court. However Selkirk is only a few miles from Melrose and presumably the Abbot would quite normally visit the king when he was in the area. The most likely explanation for the Abbot's association with this charter is the one founded on geographical proximity.

On the face of it there is nothing particularly to connect



the occasion of this charter issued at Selkirk and witnessed by those normally with the king and a local abbot, with that of the charter issued at Gretna (RRS ii No. 255) discussed previously. They both involved the grant by William I of land in the territory of Dumfries to religious institutions, and presumably they both date from the period after the king took lower Nithsdale into his own hand, but there seems to be no reason to regard them as linked together chronologically nor to be associated with William I's return from Galloway to Carlisle with Roland in July or August 1186. In fact the date of the Selkirk charter precludes its connection with that occasion.

In the text of this Selkirk charter the term for the ancient fortification is 'vetus castellarium' and the location and nature of this landmark have been discussed at length in the previous section on pre-burghal buildings and structures (p. 78 ). It seems most likely that this feature is to be identified with Kirkland Moat, an ancient earthwork on a prominent site on the crest of a high spur some way to the south of St. Michael's Church at Dumfries, the cemetery of which was the other landmark mentioned in this grant. The adjective 'old' in this context seems to have been added to make it clear that one needed to look for an old fashioned and non-functional type of earthwork, rather than for one familiar to contemporary eyes and the military engineers of that time, to be sure of this landmark.

George Neilson took the reference to an old fortification to imply the existence of a new castle at that time and suggested that they occupied neighbouring sites at Castledykes (Neilson Dumfries 168). He regarded the later evidence for the royal castle of Dumfries at Castledykes as supporting this conclusion (*ibid.*). The idea that there were two castles at Dumfries at the period when the burgh was founded has become part of the accepted framework of ideas, and some efforts have been made to give them an historical context

(see above p.78.). A.A.M.Duncan notes on this that, "RRS ii No 216 refers to the vetus castellarium of Dumfries and is our evidence that two castle sites then existed. Its date was said by Dr. G Neilson to be 1186, but it must be 1179-85 and is probably of 1179; thus the new castle was probably erected before 1179 " (Duncan Making of the Kingdom 183n). As discussed already, it seems likely that William's first castle is represented by the motte called 'the paradise' at Castledykes, and that the more elaborate royal castle of Dumfries was presumably not constructed until after 1183 X 1188, at which time the chapel in the castle would certainly have been recorded along with the Church and the chapel of St. Thomas, had it existed (RRS ii No 254). It will be recalled that Neilson dealt rather scathingly with the arguments suggesting that the record of a new castle at Ayr also implied an old one (Neilson Dumfries 161). It is not inappropriate in turn to suggest with regard to Dumfries that as no proof exists of there being two early castles at Castledykes, the verbal argument based on the word 'old' is itself worthless.

No. 4 (RRS ii No. 254)

William the king grants to Kelso Abbey for the use and building work of the abbey the church of Dumfries with its land, teinds and offerings, and the chapel of St. Thomas in that burgh and the toft belonging to that chapel and with five acres of land which the king has given to the same Church and chapel in free alms with which he has caused Philip de Valognes to invest them.

Witnesses    Jocelin, Bishop of Glasgow  
                  Hugh, Bishop of St. Andrews  
                  John, Bishop of Dunkeld  
                  Mathew, Bishop of Aberdeen  
                  Henry, Abbot of St Thomas (Arbroath)  
                  Earl Duncan  
                  Philip de Valognes  
                  William de Lindesey

at Dumfries.

The date-limits of this charter are 1183 X 1188. It is the oldest known record of there being a burgh at Dumfries, but the text suggests that at the time of the grant to Kelso Abbey the burgh had already been established for some time.

The pieces of evidence in the text may be placed in roughly chronological order as follows:

- stage 1. the burgh is created — presumably by the king
- stage 2. a chapel dedicated to St. Thomas is provided in the burgh — either as part of the original layout or to meet a need subsequently. A toft belongs to the chapel.
- stage 3. the king caused Philip de Valognes to invest the same church and chapel with five acres of land.
- stage 4. the king grants by this charter all the ecclesiastical institutions at Dumfries with all their endowments and incomes to Kelso Abbey as a supplementary source of revenue.

Stage 4 is closely dateable to a period of five years. It would be interesting to see how far back the probable date of stage 1 may be pushed by a discussion of the evidence from stage 3 and stage 2.

G.W.S. Barrow makes pertinent observations with regard to each of these stages. With relevance to stage 3 he writes that, 'The reference to Philip de Valognes suggests that he was acting as chamberlain, with the responsibility for royal burghs which certainly belonged to that office by the thirteenth century' (RRS ii 289n). Philip de Valognes seems to have been chamberlain at two periods, viz. 1165-c. 1171 and c. 1193 - 1214 (ibid. 33). This would suggest that stage 3 should be dated to 1165- c. 1171. (De Valognes also figures, together with the abbot of Melrose and the king's sheriff, as giving sasine to Paisley Abbey of land in Roxburghshire, in an apparently contemporary charter dateable to 1179 X 1189 when he was not chamberlain (RRS ii No. 219). This may tend to throw some doubt on the suggested dating of stage 3, although the land concerned was not in any way associated with a burgh.)

Relevant to stage 2 is Barrow's comment that, 'The somewhat unusual attestation of the abbot of Arbroath (St. Thomas) in the south-west of Scotland may go to confirm the suggestion that St. Thomas's chapel in Dumfries was dedicated to Thomas of Canterbury' (ibid. 289n). This seems to be rather too

tenuous a connection to take this emphasis. Had the occasion of his presence been the consecration of a new chapel to St. Thomas of Canterbury then the attendance of the abbot of Arbroath would have been most appropriate and desirable, but the chapel had already been consecrated for some time. The five acres of land were an endowment to the church and the chapel both of which must have existed before Philip de Valognes invested them with this land. Even if the hypothesis for the dating of stage 3 is regarded as erroneous, and the church and chapel taken as having been jointly invested with the five acres for some reason immediately before the charter was issued by which the king handed over all to Kelso Abbey, it can be shown that the chapel must already have been in existence prior to this. The toft with which the chapel was endowed does not figure as a part of the land with which de Valognes is recorded as having invested the church and chapel, as it surely would had the chapel only just been consecrated in the presence of the abbot of Arbroath who also witnessed the charter.

The purpose of consecrating the chapel would also perhaps have been intimated in the charter if this had been indeed the occasion of the gathering at Dumfries of four bishops as well as the abbot. As the internal evidence from the charter makes it most unlikely that this is the explanation for their presence, there must have been other good reasons for this unusual gathering of high churchmen at Dumfries and the attendance of the abbot of St. Thomas probably had little connection with the fact that there was a chapel in the burgh dedicated to St. Thomas.

Although there is no evidence that the St. Thomas to whom the chapel was dedicated was indeed St. Thomas of Canterbury (Thomas a Becket), the possible chronological implications of this identification are of interest. Becket was martyred in 1170 and his influence was believed to have helped Henry II to overcome William I king of Scots in 1174. Although



popularly revered, it is unlikely that a chapel would have been dedicated to him before he was canonised by the Pope in March 1173 (Barrow Feudal Britain 155). William I founded the great Tironensian abbey at Arbroath dedicated to St Thomas the Martyr (RRS ii No. 197) in 1178.

There is a conflict between the 'chamberlain' hypothesis relating to stage 3 which would put this at 1165 - c 1171 and the 'Becket' hypothesis for the previous stage which would put this at 1173 - 1188. Either could be correct but not both. If the 'chamberlain' hypothesis is preferred then both stage 3 and stage 2 must fall into the period 1165-1171, but the chapel cannot have been dedicated to Becket. If the 'Becket' hypothesis is correct, then stages 3 and 2 must both fall within the period 1173- 1188 but the suggestion that Philip de Volognes was acting as chamberlain with a special responsibility for burghs at this period, would have to be discounted.

There is of course the distinct possibility that both hypotheses are wrong, and that both Philip de Volognes was acting as a deputy Chamberlain as he seems to have done under Walter de Berkeley who was Chamberlain c. 1171 - c.1193 (RRS ii 33), and that the chapel may not have been dedicated in honour of St. Thomas of Canterbury. If this is the case then stage 1, the founding of the burgh by William, can be dated on this evidence no more closely than to 1165 - 1188, and the chapel to after 1173. In either case the reference to the burgh and the chapel in the charter gives a terminal date of 1183 X 1188. Before trying to draw together the evidence from this and the other charters, the relevant argument put forward by George Neilson will be considered.

This was the fourth of Neilson's charters and the last of the three which, for the purpose of his argument, he assumed to have been issued at the same time. He noted that at the time of this charter the church, chapel, land and tithes were



the king's to give to Kelso and drew the conclusion that the church at Dumfries was a new one (Neilson Dumfries 168-9). The evidence that his predecessor at Dumfries, Radulf son of Dunegal, had granted land to the church there in his time (Scots Peerage<sup>vi</sup> 287) does not appear to have been available when he wrote.

Neilson suggested that the context of the issue of the three charters had been certain events recorded in chronicles for 1186. In May of that year William I was at the Council of Oxford with many of his nobles and also Jocelyn Bishop of Glasgow and Ernald Abbot of Melrose. Henry then marched to Carlisle and had to send William I and his brother David twice before Roland agreed to submit to Henry II at Carlisle. All the earls and barons of Scotland then swore along with William and his brother and the Bishop of Glasgow, that they would ensure that Roland would remain loyal to Henry. The period of these events was apparently from May to the beginning of August 1186.

The prime assumption on which George Neilson based his interpretation of the evidence was that the three charters, nos 2, 3 and 4 could properly be regarded as a group and that their evidence and witness lists could be conflated. He wrote:

'If the list of distinguished persons occurring in this narrative from the chronicles ..... be now compared, with the names in the three Dumfries charters, not only do we find the King, Bishop Jocelyn, Roland, Earl David and Abbot Ernald present as witnesses, but in the Gretna charter Roland appears actually in the train of William at Gretna, where there was the famous ford of Sulwath, or Solway, the direct road to and from Carlisle. Hence it seems exceedingly probable that these charters may with confidence be referred to July or August 1186. And thus to 1186 will be assigned the earliest attribution to it of the character of a burgh. It is called a burgh in one of the three charters; another of them by its allusion to the old castlestead implies the recent erection of a new castle; besides the church of St. Michael, most likely a recent erection, there is a chapel to Thomas of Canterbury, killed in 1170, whose most famous

memorial in Scotland was Arbroath Abbey, founded by William in 1178. There was soon another chapel, if it was not already existing in 1186. It was in the castle, as we learn from a litigation dating about the year 1200. Most likely it was that chapel dedicated to St. Mary, and commonly called the "Casledikis", of which we still hear in the sixteenth century.'

'On all sides are indications of rapid movement between 1173 and 1200. A new castle, a new church, a new chapel to St. Mary, a new chapel to St. Thomas, a new burgh, first heard of in 1186, simultaneously with the new castle' (Neilson Dumfries 170-71).

It will by now have become apparent that these bold statements by George Neilson are based on a very doubtful premise. The only link between the various pieces of evidence in the three charters and the recorded events and personalities of May - August 1186, is Neilson's assumption that the charters are a group from one time and that it was proper therefore for him to match the total roll of witnesses with the chronicled gathering in 1186 at Carlisle. If the evidence is reviewed the validity of this assumption and the conclusions from his argument can be evaluated.

## No. 2

(RRS ii No. 255)  
land to St. Peter's  
hospital at York  
(no merchants)

## witnesses:

Jocelin Bp. Glasgow.  
Rich. de Moreville  
constable.

Robt. the Chaplain.

Robt. de Quinci.

Hugo de Sigillo )  
Rich. de prebenda ) clerks

Robt. de Brus.

Alan son of Walter.  
Roland son of Uhtred.

Walt. de Berkeley,  
Chamberlain.

William de Lyndesey.

at Gretna  
1175 X 1190

## No. 3

(RRS ii No. 216)  
to Glasgow Cathedral  
toft between  
cemetary and old  
fortification.

## witnesses:

David, king's  
brother .

Abbot Ernald of  
Melrose.

Rich. de Moreville  
constable.

Walt. de Berkeley  
Chamberlain.

Philip de Valognes.

at Selkirk  
1179 X 1185

## No. 4

(RRS ii No. 254)  
to Kelso Abbey  
Church & chapel  
in burgh

## witnesses:

Jocelin Bp. Glasgow.  
Hugh Bp. St. Andrews.

John Bp. Dunkeld.

Mathew Bp. Aberdeen.

Henry Abb. Arbroath.

Earl Duncan.

Philip de Valognes.

William de Lyndesey.

at Dumfries  
1183 X 1188

It is clear from the limit dates of No. 3 that if the charters indeed had formed a group from one time they could none of them have been associated with the events of 1186. But Neilson's argument in this respect is circular, in that the presumption that the charters form a group seems to have been based on the correspondance between the people in the roll of their witnesses and the personages recorded as being associated with the happenings of July- August 1186. In fact it is not logically possible to adjust Neilson's argument to fit the date 1185, as A.E.Truckell has suggested (Truckell Summary pt. 1 p.1). The cohesion of the group of charters and the basis of Neilson's argument hinges on the unique circumstances of the gathering of the Scots nobles and clergy when Henry II was at Carlisle in July - August 1186. Since one of the charters can be shown to date from before this year, and probably dates from 1179, the whole of Neilson's argument must be regarded as being based on a false premise and it, and its conclusions must be rejected as being unreliable.

An interpretation of the evidence provided by the four charters discussed by Neilson must still form the basis of any discussion of the origin and early history of the king's burgh at Dumfries, but the charters must now be accepted as each standing on its own. Without the confusion stemming from a false assumption that charters nos 2, 3 and 4 were issued at one time, it is possible to estimate more accurately the value and limitations of the information provided by these documents individually. It is inevitable that any conclusions drawn as to the chronology, relative or absolute, of the origins of the burgh will be less precise than those proposed hitherto. This is due to the essential limitations of the written evidence. Any relevant evidence from buildings or structures can be used to supplement the written record, and limit the range of reasonable conjecture.

It is established that the king's burgh at Dumfries originated at some time between 1165, after which date the area

passed into crown ownership, and 1188, the upper date-limit of the charter of William describing it as a burgh (RRS ii No. 254). During this period of twenty-three years the four charters discussed by George Neilson were issued. He numbered them in a sequence which, according to the best information available to him, represented their chronological order as defined by their limit-dates. Using fuller information and with the benefit of a wider range of acts of William for purposes of comparison, G.W.S. Barrow numbered the charter which was Neilson's No. 2, so that it might be regarded as the latest of the four. The following concordance makes this clear:

<u>NEILSON</u>		<u>BARROW</u>
No. 1 (before 1177)	:	No. 189 ( 1175 X 1177)
No. 2 (1180 X 1188)	:	No. 255 ( 1175 X 1190)
No. 3 (1180 X 1189)	:	No. 216 (1179 X 1185)
No. 4 (1183 X 1188)	:	No. 254 (1183 X 1188)
(Neilson <u>Dumfries</u> 166-68)		( <u>RRS ii</u> sub. ref.).

The four charters will continue to be referred to by the numbers given to them by George Neilson but it must now be borne in mind that these are reference numbers only and do not necessarily imply a particular chronological sequence.

No. 1 (RRS ii No. 189): introduced at p.123 above.

The main significance of this writ is that it is evidence that William I and his household were 'at Dumfries' at some time in the period 1175 to 1177. It was clearly therefore a known named settlement where the king and his retinue could be entertained and where men could be expected to recall the visit of the king and, to that extent to vouch for the authenticity of the document. The connotations of the phrase apud Drumfres have been examined at length already (above p. 113 ) in relation to a charter of Radulf (Reid Dumfries App. A, No. 1), the native lord of Dumfries and Caerlaverock, granted before the period of crown ownership. There it was argued that since Dumfries appeared to have been



the demesne centre for lower Nithsdale, its lord's residence, in the form of an enclosure containing a hall and other buildings but later probably elaborated into the motte-and-bailey castle at Townhead, was the least to be expected. This and also an informal market settlement on the slope to the south probably bearing the same economic relationship to the Townhead castle as the early 'burgh' at Annan bore to the adjacent castle of Robert de Brus, was regarded as being the most to be expected under Radulf. King William took over the demesne centre and whatever else existed in the form of a settlement, in or after 1165, and ten to twelve years later he is recorded as being 'at Dumfries' in charter No. 1 ( see discussion above, p. 123 ). The phrase is again uninformative as to the status of the settlement at Dumfries but it is unlikely to have been any less elaborate than under Radulf. Indeed it is likely to have been of a higher status, since the development of Dumfries as the only king's burgh and royal strong-point in the south-west to the south of Lanark, seems to have been the very purpose of the king's taking and retaining in his own hand, this strategic zone of Nithsdale. Although uninformative as to detail, this reference to Dumfries in 1175-1177 shows that the settlement had survived the Galwegian revolt signalled by William's capture and imprisonment by the English in 1174-75. As to the question whether the settlement was already a king's burgh or had not then received that status, the charter is silent and here therefore neutral. The burgh could have been in existence at the time of the king's visit recorded in this writ.

See Fig. 13  
opp. p. 114.

No 2 (RRS ii No. 255) : introduced at p. 124 above .

This charter of land in the territory of Dumfries and Caerlaverock given to the Hospital of St. Peter of York by William, specifies that the men of the hospital dwelling on the land shall be free of toll unless any of them are merchants carrying on trade. This condition for the protection of trade does not appear in a similar grant to the same hospital by Radulf



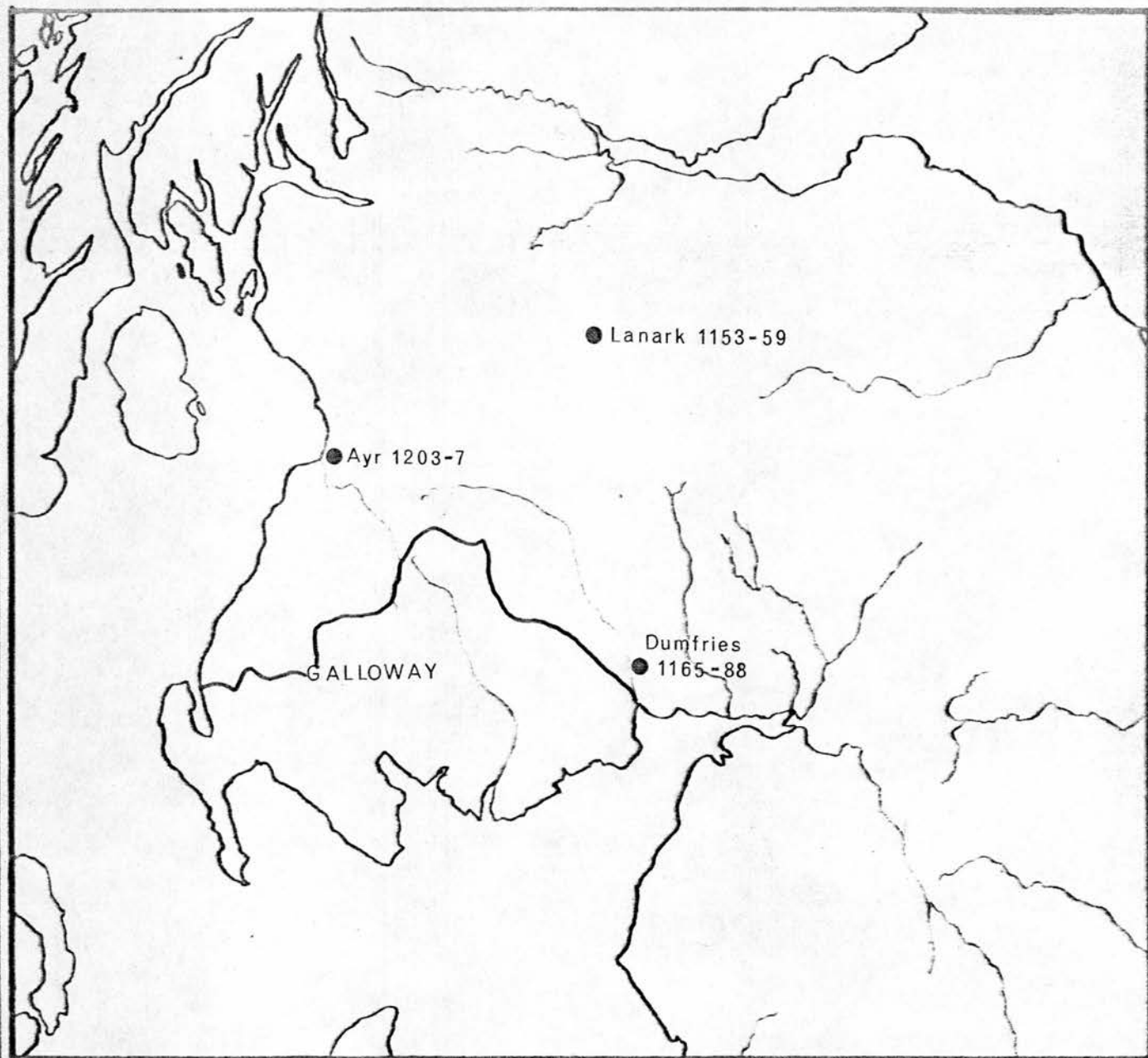
(see above 114. ) and only makes sense in this remote part of south-west Scotland, if the nearest burgh of the king was rather nearer than Lanark. The foundation of William's burgh at Dumfries after Radulf's grant and within the territory of Dumfries before the issue of this charter, would seem to be the best explanation of these circumstances. The charter makes no reference to a settlement of Dumfries or of its status, but there is no reason why it should have. Like charter No. 1 it is neutral in this, but the protective clause suggests that it was issued at a time when the king's burgh had already been established at Dumfries. The date of the charter cannot be fixed more closely than to 1175 X 1190. If the argument that the protective clause means that the burgh had already been founded is accepted, then it is possible to say only that the burgh may have been founded before 1175 X 1190.

No. 3 (RRS ii No. 216) : introduced at p.127 above.

By this charter William granted to the bishop and Cathedral of Glasgow the land at Dumfries lying between the cemetery of the church and an old fortification. The land was clearly in crown ownership at the time but there is no reference to a burgh. This may be because the church was outside the early burgh, which seems to have been laid out to the north of the Mill Burn, and the land given to the bishop of Glasgow probably lay to the south of the cemetery. As this land probably did not impinge on the territory of the early burgh, there would be no reason to mention the burgh. The charter itself was issued at Selkirk and was witnessed among others by the abbot from the nearby abbey of Melrose. The date is 1179 X 1185 but most probably it was issued in 1179 like a similar but more exactly dated charter to Glasgow issued at Selkirk by William with some of the same witnesses. Apart from recording the grant of land lying adjacent to the churchyard at Dumfries by William to the bishop in whose diocese the parish lay, probably in 1179, this charter does not have a particular bearing on the date of the founding of the burgh.

# DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

## KINGS' BURGHS ABOUT GALLOWAY



0 miles 50

WAD'78

Fig. 14.

No 4 (RRS ii No. 254) : introduced at p. 129 above.

By comparison with the paucity of evidence provided by the other three charters, it is difficult not to place undue emphasis on the date when the comparative wealth of evidence it provides was recorded. It is not a foundation charter of the burgh but is concerned with a later stage of its development when the ecclesiastical arrangements of a chapel in the burgh and the older parish church, together with their original endowments and a more recent grant to them jointly by William, were then being granted in toto to help the building work at Kelso Abbey, itself starved of money due in part to the English occupation of Roxburgh. The document is dateable to 1183 X 1188, was issued at Dumfries and is the first direct written evidence of the existence of the king's burgh at Dumfries. It also gives the first record of a chapel in the burgh dedicated to St. Thomas and endowed with a toft and speaks of five acres of arable which the king had given in alms to the church and chapel, with which they had been invested by Philip de Valognes. From this internal evidence it is clear that the burgh must have been established for some time before this charter was issued, so that to determine the date of this charter is to determine a date, some time before which, the burgh originated. How long before must be left to reasonable conjecture in the light of what is known from other charters and of the history of William's reign in general.

It has been argued above that the foundation of burghs by the crown in south-west Scotland was part of a long-term strategy to impose direct royal control in those parts. Lanark appears to have been founded by Malcolm IV in 1153 X 1159 (Pryde Burghs No. 18), Dumfries by William I in 1165 X 1188, and Ayr by the same king in 1203 X 1207 (RRS ii No. 462). The creation at Dumfries of a stronghold to control the eastern entrance to Galloway may already have been one of the aims of Malcolm IV at the period of his successful campaigns in Galloway in 1160. The creation of the motte-and-

bailey castle at Townhead in Dumfries may have represented a step in this direction, while the area remained the territory of Radulf, a native lord who seems to have been consistently identified with aims of the kings of Scots under David I and Malcolm.

William was a younger brother of Malcolm and it is likely that he began his military service in these Galloway campaigns and would appreciate the great strategic value of the position of Dumfries then held by an ally of the crown. William witnessed thirteen acts of Malcolm evenly spaced through the ~~last~~ twelve years of his reign and Aeneas Mackay has suggested that he probably acted as guardian of the kingdom during Malcolm's final illness in 1164-65 (D.N.B. sub 'William the Lion'). The early period of William's reign was characterised by a continuation of the policies of Malcolm's reign, and for the first seven years he enjoyed peace at home and with England (RRS ii 4). It seems likely that the king's burgh at Dumfries was founded and became established during this favourable period

Malcolm IV died at Jedburgh in December 1165. What is probably his last charter was issued there (RRS i No 265) and was witnessed by his brother William and, among others, by Radulf son of Dunegal. Radulf had figured regularly in the charters of David I and Malcolm (see p. 111 above) so that his absence from the charters of William I points to his having died soon after Malcolm, in or soon after 1165. It has been argued above (p. 120) that Radulf probably died childless and that William took his lands of Lower Nithsdale into his own hand as an escheat. The laying-out of a burgh of the king on the land to the south of the Townhead castle was probably completed soon after, as the culmination of a long-standing royal policy, in which the erection of that castle was a preliminary step. The erection of the burgh may have been contemplated by the crown for some time and awaited only the occasion of the death of their ally Radulf,

for it to be brought into effect. There appears to have been no revolt in Nithsdale following the crown escheat of Radulf's holding, so it is likely that this was done by prior agreement with Radulf's kin, who continued to hold Glencairn and upper Nithsdale.

In 1173 William was drawn into a concerted rising against Henry II by the promise of Northumberland of which that king had earlier deprived him. William was taken prisoner at Alnwick in 1174 and made the Treaty of Falaise. This was the beginning of the second period of his reign. A humiliating period for him and for the Scots, when for fifteen years they were forced to acknowledge Henry II as overlord, and for most of the time Roxburgh, Berwick and Edinburgh were garrisoned by the English. The earlier motte-and-bailey castle at Castledykes represented by the motte called 'paradise', may have been erected by William when he first acquired Dumfries (see above p. 82 ) but if not (William having made do with the Townhead castle he had inherited commanding the north-east approaches to the burgh) then the preparations for war with the English in 1173-4 could have been the occasion of the erection of this castle guarding the southern approaches to the burgh by land or river and commanding the lowest ford out of Galloway. It was clearly designed to meet a new threat from the south.

The evidence from the charters Nos 1, 2 and 3 poses no difficulty to the thesis that the burgh originated about 1166. Charter No 1 suggests that Dumfries survived the Galwegian revolt of 1174-75 fermented by Gilbert and Uhtred when William was taken prisoner. Charter No 2 is from the same period or later and shows William making a grant of land in alms but making a careful reservation apparently to protect the existing trading monopoly of the burgesses of Dumfries. Charter No 3, probably from 1179, shows William granting more land in alms, this time the whole area extending south from the



churchyard to the 'old fortification' (probably Kirkland Moat). This land must have been well outside the limits of the burgh at this time, since the burgh is not mentioned as such.

A.A.M. Duncan has suggested (Duncan Making of the Kingdom 183-4) that as part of the settlement made by Henry II after William had brought Gilbert lord of Galloway to him in 1176 or 1178 after the Galwegian revolt, Roland was given the lands in Galloway west from the Nith as far as the Fleet which had been held by his father Uhtred (whom Gilbert had had murdered in 1174). This would account for the renewed trouble with Gilbert from 1182-83 up to his death on 1st January 1185. The extent of William's complicity in Roland's seizure of the whole of Galloway thereafter is not clear, but Roland was a protege of the king of Scots, and Roland was confirmed in his united lordship in 1186 by Henry II. This makes it likely from 1176 or 1178 Roland's lands served as a buffer between Gilbert and the burgh of Dumfries to the east, and that the campaign of conquest by Roland was turned westward against Gilbert's territory beyond the River Fleet. For both reasons it is likely that the king's burgh was not destroyed in this period of revolts but continued as a border outpost of the crown.

As has been said Charter No. 4 is the first document to record the existence of the burgh as such, but from internal evidence it must date from a period subsequent to that of its foundation. It can be dated to 1183 X 1188, that is to the second and more humiliating period of William's reign and was probably occasioned by the English occupation of Roxburgh preventing the king's previous grant of part of the revenues from that burgh from reaching the building works at the Abbey of Kelso. There is possibly a clue to a closer dating in its witness list.

The witnesses included Jocelin bishop of Glasgow, Hugh bishop

of St. Andrews, John bishop of Dunkeld, Mathew bishop of Aberdeen, Henry abbot of Arbroath, and Earl Duncan one of the king's oldest advisors. It does not include Richard de Moreville, the Constable, who frequently appeared as a witness, nor the king's clerk Richard de Prebenda, who was a witness less frequently, although they were normally with the king's household. Considering the circumstances this is rather a strange group of men to find together, and the exclusion of two of the king's household may be significant. For most of the period from 1178 to the death of bishop Hugh in 1188, he and John the Scot (here named as bishop of Dunkeld) were rival claimants to St. Andrews and the central figures of opposed parties. John the Scot had been consecrated bishop of St. Andrews by his uncle Mathew bishop of Aberdeen under English protection at Edinburgh: Hugh at St. Andrews by the influence of William I whose chaplain he had been. Henry II had sought to mediate, John had excommunicated those of William's court he considered his enemies including Richard de Moreville and Richard de Prebenda, the archbishop of York and the bishop of Durham had for a time excommunicated William I and placed the kingdom under an interdict, and frequent visits had been paid by Jocelin bishop of Glasgow and the contestants to seek the aid of a succession of short-lived Popes. In the first half of 1183 the Pope persuaded both to resign their claims and he then, probably through William's influence, conferred St. Andrews on Hugh and Dunkeld on John. It is only in the ensuing two or three years of truce that the parties to this bitter struggle are likely to have been found together, and even then the absence of the members of the king's household whom John regarded as his particular enemies is understandable. Probably by November 1185 and certainly by July 1186 both John and Hugh were at the Papal curia at Verona once more pursuing their rival claims to St. Andrews (Duncan Making of the Kingdom 270-4). This makes it most unlikely that this charter dates from July or August 1186 as Neilson suggested (Neilson Dumfries 170). It seems more likely that it dates from about 1184.

## PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing historical discussion on the origin of the burgh at Dumfries has argued for a rather earlier date for its foundation than that hitherto generally accepted. George Neilson claimed that the document in which it first appears as a burgh could be dated to July- August 1186 and he suggested that it was probably first given burgh status in the period of the Galwegian revolt which had started in 1174 (Neilson Dumfries 170, 164). The evidence from documents and from structures has been presented to suggest that the document containing the first record of the burgh should be dated to circa 1184, and that the burgh was probably founded circa 1166, when Dumfries may have been already in the king's hand due to the death of Radulf the previous owner, last recorded alive in 1165. There is numismatic evidence which can appropriately be introduced at this point to show that the earlier dating is to be preferred.

Study of the coinage of William I suggests that Raul Derling, the king's moneyer at Roxburgh, the most important of the king's mints, was compelled to move the mint to Dumfries when Roxburgh was handed over to the English in 1174 under the Treaty of Falaise (Stewart Mints 184: 198-9: 276 No.3). The particular type of coin was not minted after c. 1180 which fact has been a difficulty in the attribution of these coins marked 'DUN' to a Dumfries mint (the obvious choice, being in the Borders and the only other possibility being Dunfermline). I.H.Stewart wrote that, 'Though this mint if also in the Borders, might be Dumfries, a castle not surrendered to the English, it did not come into William I's hands until 1186, with the death of Ralph [Radulf], son of Dunegal, lord of Nithsdale and it is questionable whether the Dun coins, the earliest strikings from an extensively used Square-Cross obverse die, can be dated as late as this' (ibid 199). As to the suitability of Dumfries for a mint-town he was quite clear, and wrote that, 'Dumfries, which occupied a strategic place

at the first readily fordable point up the river Nith from the Solway, was certainly a likely site for a mint in the thirteenth century when it attained great prosperity, although it was later to suffer heavily in the Edwardian wars. It also has a claim to be considered as the mint Dun under William I....' (ibid. 184). In giving 1186 as the date of Nithsdale's coming into William's hands, Ian Stewart here seems to have been influenced by G.W.S. Barrow's conjecture that Radulf died c. 1185, itself apparently based on George Neilson's conclusions. '1186' is also the date put against Dumfries in Pryde's list (Pryde Burghs 13), which in this also follows Neilson's article. For Dumfries to have been chosen as a mint-town in 1174, it must have already been a reasonably well-established and prospering burgh, which points to its having been founded some years previously, and this was probably in c. 1166.

#### A Chronological Framework

The conclusions of the argument put forward in this part of the study, can be incorporated in a chronological table as follows:

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| c. 1124        | Dunegal, lord of Nithsdale at the time of the Brus charter of Annandale, on its eastern border.  |
| c. 1135        | Nithsdale divided among the sons of Dunegal with Radulf taking Dumfries and lower Nithsdale. Townhead demesne-centre at Dumfries the <u>caput</u> of his lordship. |
| 1153 X<br>1159 | Burgh of Lanark founded by Malcolm IV. Castle and sheriff recorded soon after.   |
| c. 1160        | Townhead castle created at the time of Malcolm IV's campaigns into Galloway.   |
| <u>c. 1166</u> | <u>William I having taken lower Nithsdale on death of Radulf, founded the king's burgh of Dumfries.</u>  |
| c. 1173        | Motte-and-bailey castle ('paradise') erected at Castledykes to protect the burgh from attack from the south.   |

- c. 1174      Burgh sufficiently developed to be an alternative mint-town when Roxburgh was in English hands.
- c. 1184      Parish Church and the chapel in the burgh granted to Kelso Abbey to replace revenues from Roxburgh. (First written record of the burgh).
- c. 1184 X      Royal Castle of Dumfries with its chapel built  
c. 1200      at Castledykes. ? Sheriffdom of Dumfries created.
- 1203 X      Burgh of Ayr founded by William next the 'new  
1207      castle'. Sheriff recorded soon after.
- 1237      First written record of a sheriff of Dumfries.



part three:

TOPOGRAPHY

### EVIDENCE FROM MAPS AND PLANS

The term 'town-plan' can be used to signify the pattern of the physical arrangement of actual buildings, streets, boundaries and topographical features on the site of a town: it can also be used of a scaled-down representation of this pattern made on paper at a particular time. The range and quality of the latter type of plan, available to show the historical stages in the development of Dumfries, will be discussed here. The way that evidence for yet earlier stages of its growth which may be deduced from an analysis of relict features surviving in the physical pattern of the town's layout (or for convenience from analysis of a scientifically surveyed scale plan of it) will be discussed in the next part of the study, when the cartographic evidence has been reviewed.

In the past when a town-house was built, it was normally replaced after a few years or a few centuries, but the property boundaries and the frontage-lines of the street within which it, and earlier and subsequent houses there, were built to fit, once laid-down, tended to remain immutable (Conzen Town Plans 117, Alnwick 3-5, Townscapes 61-5). In the older parts of Dumfries the street pattern and the regular comb-like pattern of long narrow tofts or burgage plots running back from the street, were created when the burgh was founded in c. 1166. The amalgamation or subdivision of burgage plots in the past, periodic extensions of the layout, and the cutting of new streets or the widening of old ones in the last century or so, has obscured to some extent the clarity of the original layout. The evidence from plans drawn in the eighteenth century and subsequently, is invaluable in helping to recover the arrangements of parts of the town's layout as it existed before the alterations made by more recent generations.

A recent study of the plan-layout of St. Andrews showed clearly that planning had determined the burgh's form from the time of its foundation, when an earlier settlement (a clachan) was replanned and laid out anew on a grandiose scale in c. 1150. Later extensions of the burgh were also planned, with building alignments and plot boundaries being each time set-out beforehand and the town's gates being moved further outwards to fit the new arrangement (Brooks and Whittington St. Andrews 293). The first stage of the burgh at St. Andrews had a simple, uniform plan-layout strongly suggesting a single design. The designed layout of two streets with their burgage plots presumably was the work of Mainard the Fleming who is recorded as being rewarded for 'building and establishing the burgh' (burgum ..... aedificare et instaurere (ESC No. 169)). The authors of the St. Andrews study pointed to the fact that on the continent this work of the initial colonizers was an expense borne by the seignorial founder and was normally completed within the first year (Brooks & Whittington 290). They saw no reason to suppose that in Scotland it took any longer.

The evidence from St. Andrews and that from similar studies of Perth, Glasgow and Ayr (Duncan Perth; Kellett Glasgow; Dodd Ayr) points to the planned nature of the layouts of medieval burghs ganerally in Scotland. This conclusion had been argued for previously on historical grounds by William Mackay Mackenzie in his Rhind Lectures of 1945 (Mackenzie Burghs 56-61); and from a general survey of Scottish town-plans published in 1969 (Whitehand & Alauddin Town Plans). A report prepared by the Medieval Urban Archaeology Committee of the Council of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland published in 1972 was quite certain on this point, stating that 'The royal planners of David's burghs, such as Perth, Aberdeen, Haddington and Peebles, for example , used the town-planning skills of their day in laying out the pattern of streets and building plots just as modern town planners do now' (SAS Med. Burghs 8). From this it can safely be assumed

that the simple layout of the town-plan surviving in the central zone of Dumfries is medieval in origin and represents a planned development by king David's descendant William I in c. 1166, probably with later medieval planned extensions. The widespread survival of such examples of medieval town-planning is explained in the report by the same Committee: 'The street plans in our burghs and even the boundaries of building plots have remained almost unchanged since the middle ages. The slow rate of expansion in earlier times and the conservatism of legal practices have meant that these ancient patterns have been 'frozen' on the ground. It is possible to find in quite modern title-deeds a description of land 'bounding upon the tenement of the late John Smith', who turns out on investigation to have died in the sixteenth century' (ibid. 9-10). At Dumfries the core of the present layout of streets and property boundaries in the central area is substantially that laid-out by a planner of the twelfth century to serve the new burgh of William I.

The fact that the medieval town plan at Dumfries has conditioned the built form of the town-centre at all times during the last eight centuries might suggest that the town's layout could have been recorded on paper at any time during that period. However the slow development of techniques of surveying and of depicting town-plans, in Scotland as elsewhere in Europe, meant that the first town plans in Scotland date from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and are drawn according to a convention that makes them part plan, part view and with important buildings shown in part-elevation. John Geddy's 'Bird's Eye View' plan of St. Andrews of c. 1580 (Smart St. Andrews) and the plans of Cupar and St. Andrews (1642), Edinburgh (1647) and Aberdeen (1661) by James Gordon (RSGS Early Maps Scot.: ICHC Mapping Scot. 11), follow this convention, and it will be noted that it was generally only important and prosperous towns which figured in published town-plans. (There are rather crude Elizabethan depictions of Annan and Kirkcudbright made for the purposes of military



intelligence (Armstrong Liddesdale ) but not one of Dumfries.

A similar group of important and prosperous towns were the first to benefit from (and support the production of) properly surveyed town-plans in the later eighteenth century. The finest of these were Milne's plan of Aberdeen (1789), McArthur and Barry's of Glasgow (1778 : 1782) and Laye's plan of Edinburgh (1742) (Forsyth Urban hist. bibl. 13). For many towns of a middling range of prosperity, including Dumfries, their first published large scale plan appeared among the fifty three fine town-plans in John Wood's Town Atlas of 1826. What J.B. Harley called the watershed in the history of urban cartography (Harley Maps 15), marked by the publication of Ordnance Survey large scale town-plans came in Scotland in the 1850's. Thereafter these large scale official plans supplanted the work of private cartographers in surveying and publishing town plans. Scotland was surveyed by the Ordnance Survey on a County basis, generally at 6" to a mile, with cultivated areas including towns being covered also at 25" to a mile (Harley Guide 43). The burgh of Dumfries was mapped at 6"-, 25"-, 60"-, and 10.56 feet to the mile and these O.S. 1st editions were published around 1860.

The most convenient scale at which the details can be used for comparison with those of earlier maps is the O.S. 25" to 1 mile plan, and this was surveyed again in 1898-99 (*ibid.* 46-8). At this scale parcels of land can be represented accurately as to scale and area so that the O.S. 25" can be used for taxation purposes and is termed a cadastral plan. For the purposes of this discussion the term map will be used where the scale employed is so small that nothing of the internal arrangement of the burgh's layout is represented. Where these arrangements are represented, it will be termed a plan, and this term of course will also cover the representations of parts of the town's layout, on drawings produced for street improvements and new residential areas.



### The Reliability of the Cartographic Evidence

There is a basic distinction to be drawn in dealing with maps and plans as with more conventional historical documents, that is between primary sources (i.e. plans drawn to record the layout at the time, for the purposes of the occasion) and secondary sources (i.e. conjectural cartographic reconstructions of the layout of previous times, intended as interpretations of primary sources, documentary or cartographic). As long as the appropriate reservations are observed both kinds of sources can be helpful in the reconstruction of the past.

With regard to the primary sources of cartographic evidence it must be borne in mind that as has been pointed out by J.B.Harley, 'Early town plans can seldom be accepted at their face value. They are of varying accuracy, according to circumstances such as the purpose of the survey, its scale, the techniques by which it was made, and, if printed, its publication history' (Harley Maps 7). These factors will need to be carefully considered and the historical context of the plan established, if its evidence is to be correctly interpreted. In the days before Ordnance Survey plans were readily available, the great convenience of taking the general outline of the town from an existing plan (no matter how inaccurate) rather than surveying the whole town anew when making a town plan, must be borne in mind. The perpetuation of errors and the influence of one plan on subsequent ones must be considered, together with dates of publication and, if an unpublished manuscript plan, the question of who may have been able to have had access to it.

The secondary sources of evidence as represented by plans showing hypothetical reconstructions of the former arrangement of a town or parts of it, must first of all be recognised for what they are. For example there is a danger that the striking 'Plan of Dumfries: 16th Century: showing Marshes,

Burns and Alluvial Land' printed at a scale of about 6" to 1 mile which G.W. Shirley produced to illustrate his topographical study of the town (Shirley Dumfries) might be accepted by the unwary as a primary source of evidence, rather than as an hypothetical reconstruction. Once the secondary character of the evidence presented in a plan is recognised, its value can be assessed in the normal way, by checking the accuracy of the evidence on which it is based and judging the reasonableness and extent of the conjecture involved in the reconstruction. Not all such plans however seek to put in graphic form a particular historical thesis. Some, like the series of historical maps published by the Ordnance Survey, are produced as the most convenient form for recording the distribution of particular kinds of historical sites or indicating their spatial arrangement. All these constructed plans take for granted the accuracy of the base map on which they are plotted and it seems to be no coincidence that what may be the earliest plan to have attempted to reconstruct the former layout of a part of Dumfries, dates from 1910. The accuracy of the plans of the Ordnance Survey must then have been already taken for granted, and their potential for exercises in reconstructing the past, seems to have become apparent. The great virtue of using the Ordnance Survey plan as a basis for historical reconstruction is that the surveyed plan itself contributes so much of value. It represents faithfully much of the shape and character of the site which must have influenced the layout of the town at all stages of its history. It also represents as lines on the paper many of the ancient walls and structures for which documentary evidence can supply the dates, so that by discriminating analysis and the elimination of features known to be from later periods, the spatial relationships of the surviving parts of ancient structures in the town can be determined. The density of such evidence for old structures and plot boundaries is to be found at its greatest in the 1st editions of these accurate O.S. plans, since they are based on surveys conducted before the extensive changes to streets and buildings made in the



Fig. 15. No 1. Roy plan  
1752-3



later nineteenth century and in more recent times. The 1st edition of the O.S. 25" plan of Dumfries (Fig. 21 ) will be used as a basis for plan analysis later in this study. The plans which are primary sources for the development of the town will now be discussed in chronological order, and the secondary cartographic sources will then be examined.

#### PRIMARY SOURCES

##### No. 1. Roy plan (1752-3) Figs. 15 & 16 .

The earliest plan to show the characteristic form of the layout of Dumfries is William Roy's manuscript 'Military Survey of Scotland' now in the Map Room of the British Library (formerly the British Museum). To complete this survey of Scotland the southern part was surveyed in 1752-4 working northwards from the border with William Roy himself in charge of the western section (Skelton Survey 3). This included 'Drumfries' in 1752-3 (ibid. 11). As the survey was made for military purposes after the 45 Rebellion, and the manuscript remained in the Royal Library thereafter, it is most unlikely that the plan of Dumfries as shown in the survey could have been available to influence subsequent plans of the town. There are circumstances however which suggest that a separate plan of the town was possibly produced at the time.

The scale of the 'Military Survey' is 1 inch to a thousand yards (1:36,000) and this is also the scale of the field survey sheets. General Roy accurately described it as 'rather ....a magnificent military sketch, than a very accurate map of a county' (ibid. 7) and in the field the surveyors were mainly concerned with topographical features, roads, the nature of the terrain and the extent of cultivated ground. The layouts of towns seem to have been added later using existing plans (ibid. 4) or separate larger scale surveys. The M.S. survey of Ayr by T. Walker appears to be a plan



Fig. 16. No 1. Roy plan  
1752-3 (detail)



prepared for this purpose (Dodd Ayr 332). It seems likely that the careful detail of the layout of Dumfries shown in miniature on the Military Survey may also have had its counterpart in a larger scale M.S. plan of the town probably no longer extant.

Fig. 16 is a sketch traced from an enlargement to show as accurately as the detail allows the features recorded in the Roy plan. Giving the town's layout at a larger scale, it shows that the Roy Plan is particularly valuable as a record of the layout of the area at the northern end of the town as it was before the New Bridge and Buccleuch St. were built or the Old Bridge was truncated. The street pattern and built-up area are much as they must have been in the later medieval period, with some additional roadside development outside the ports (gates) to east and south. The village of Bridgend is shown on the Galloway side of the river. In the southern part of the High Street and in the vicinity of the church there are indications of the narrowing of the streets in places which might suggest the former positions of some of the town's ports. What might have been a surviving port, is indicated at the southern end of the churchyard. There is a useful account of the layout of the town written by Robert Edgar about 1746 (Edgar History) which describes many of the features shown on this plan. This will be used later to help to reconstruct the development of the town.

No. 2. Nith plan (c. 1805) Fig. 17 .

Among the plans in the Scottish Record Office is a manuscript plan 'Draught of the River Nith from Dumfries to Carsethorn' (RHP. 469) which shows the street layout of Dumfries with the built-up frontages emphasised. An inset with the title 'That part of the Nith from the Townhead of Dumfries to the Kingholm' gives an outline plan of the town to a larger scale. This inset and the relevant part of the larger plan are reproduced in Fig. 17 . The plan comes from the papers of the Court of Session and has been dated to c. 1805 (S.R.O.

*That Part  
of the Nith from  
the Town Head  
of Dumfriess  
to the  
Kingsholm*

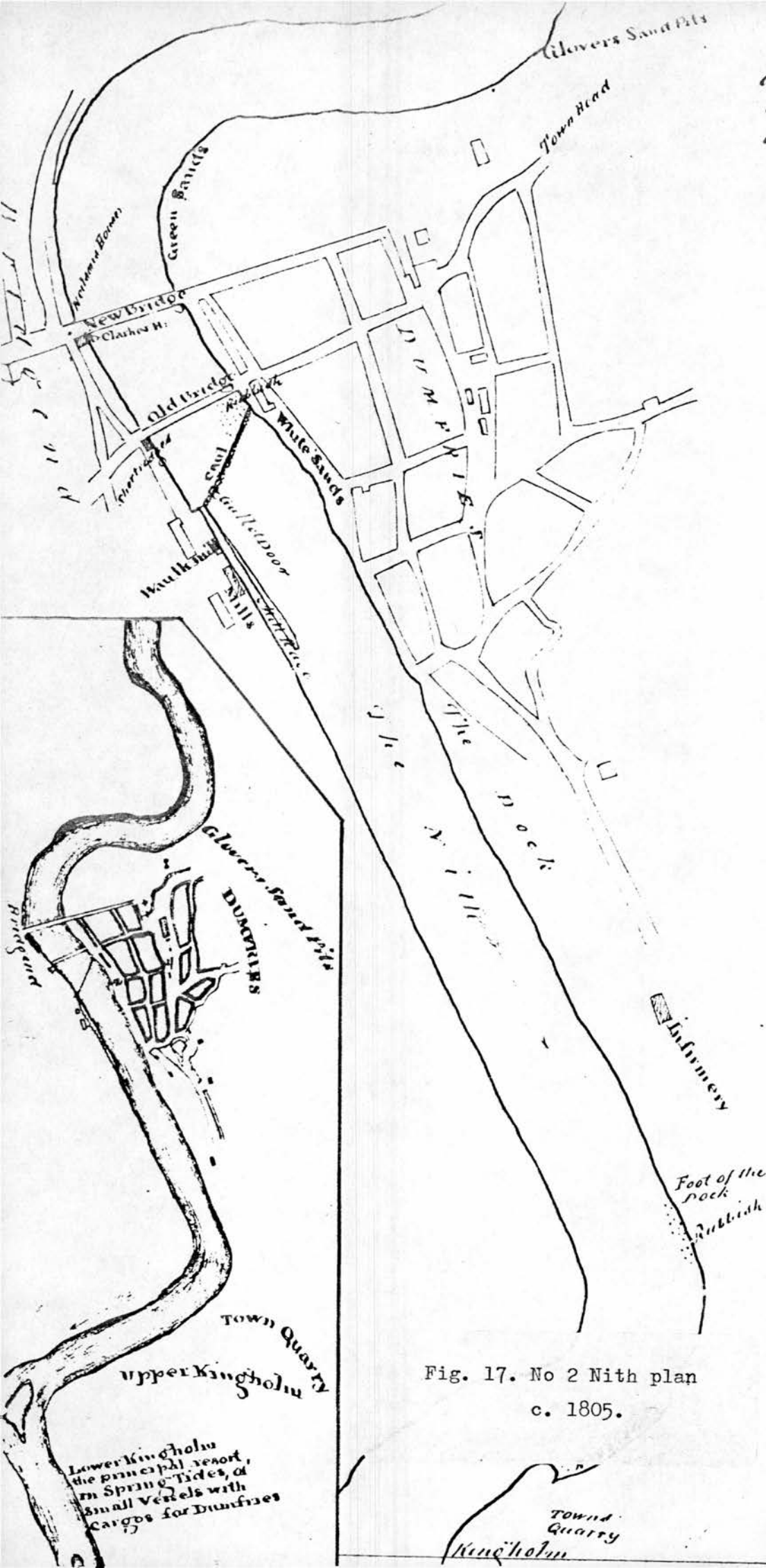


Fig. 17. No 2 Nith plan  
c. 1805.

List of Plans i, 50).

Since this plan is concerned with the river and the town is shown in needless detail it can be presumed that the outline of the town is taken from a previous plan. The smaller and larger representations of the town seem to have been taken from the same source, since the detail runs out on the southern and eastern sides of the town at the same points. The fact that the cross-shaped outline of the New Church and the vertical dumb-bell shape of the Academy, both at the northern end of the town, are shown accurately only on the smaller plan, would indicate that the common source plan was at a similarly small scale, possibly in a recent Road-Book since the New Bridge dates from 1794 (Reid Dumfries 106). An aid to the identification of this source would be the fact that in both plans the New Bridge and Buccleuch Street are shown not aligned on the New Church as they should be.

Although the Academy and New Church are indicated only by rectangles on the larger plan, it has additional details of buildings, bridges and roads nearer the river which appear to be based on actual fieldwork, and contribute to the value of this source. The outlines and proportions of the blocks of buildings at the upper end of the High Street also appear to have been drawn more accurately. On both plans the area north from Buccleuch Street is shown empty and undeveloped.

No. 3. Burn plan (1806)

Among the plans in the Scottish Record Office there is also a manuscript large-scale plan (1:600) - 'Plan of Building Ground Dumfries Belonging to Sir Geo Clark: Messrs. Riddel, Thrashie, & Laidlaw 1806' (RHP. 1241). This plan appears to have been produced in two stages. The first is a survey of the land north from Buccleuch Street to the river bank, presumably prepared by Messrs. Riddel, etc. as Sir George Clark's surveyors. Superimposed upon this is a carefully

drawn layout of 'streets and houses which is very like the (incomplete) development of this area now existing. A M.S. note in the bottom right-hand corner of the sheet reads 'Edin 20 Aug<sup>t</sup> 1806 / Robt. Burn, Arch'. Robert Burn was a well known Edinburgh architect of the time and it would appear that this is his client's copy of the layout plan he prepared for the development of the previously open area to the north of the town. The plan came to the S.R.O. with the papers of Brodie, Cuthbertson and Watson (SRO. List of Plans ii, 53) who were presumably the client's legal advisors. The area is marked as the property of John Kerr Esqr. on Wood's engraved plan of 1819 (No. 5) so that he, or some intermediate owner, may have been the client, rather than Sir George Clark.

The detail from the original survey is rather faint but the New Church and the New Bridge are shown in outline, also the Bridewell with flanking pavillions on the south side of 'Buccleuch Street' and there is a box-like 'Kirk' together with a few houses, already fronting onto the north side of that street. There is also a prominent property boundary running north from Buccleuch Street, roughly following the line of the present Gordon Street, which was to be named Nith Street from this plan.

The proposed new layout consists of a main east-west street (George Street) crossed by three shorter regularly spaced streets running north-south. From west to east these are Charlotte St., Nith Street and Castle Street. Only the easternmost and westernmost streets join Buccleuch St.: Nith Street terminates behind the box-like Kirk. An additional link (Kirk Street) in the form of a wider mews lane is suggested running north from the High Street past the eastern side of the New Church to join George Street. No new public buildings appear to have been intended, the buildings being uniformly residential of the form of 'Georgian' urban terrace which has a sunken basement 'area' between the house and the street. Three houses of this form appear to have been completed



at the northern end of Castle Street on the east side by the time of Wood's survey published in 1819, but this appears to have been the only one of the new streets to have been laid out at that time. It appears to be likely that Robert Burn may have not been fully informed as to the nature of the site since his Charlotte Street, Nith Street and the western end of his George Street are drawn as <sup>t</sup>extending well beyond the area on which it would have been practicable to build at the same level as Buccleuch Street (itself an embanked approach to the New Bridge) without constructing extensive embankments. The extra costs of building houses to this grandiose design on a sloping site seem to have effectively prevented the plots being feued out for many years. The embankments to carry the northern arm of Nith Street, the southern arm of Charlotte Street (the only part ever laid out) and the intervening length of George Street are shown still without buildings, on the O.S. 25" plan of 1858.

#### No. 4 Cowan plan (1815)

A third helpful manuscript plan in the Scottish Record Office is the 'Plan shewing an Improvement upon the English, Edinburgh and Lochmaben Roads In approaching the Town of Dumfries, by English Street as Suggested by the Magistrates and Town Council of Dumfries: The Plan and Measurements made by Sam<sup>l</sup> Cowan Land Surveyor July 26 1815' (RHP. 53) This is a large scale plan (1:520, SRO. List of Plans i, 50) showing a projected junction improvement at the eastern entry to the town, perhaps intended to ease the gradient for coaches on the Annan road, since a section along the improved length is drawn on the plan and it would have been much better than the steep ascent opposite Christie's Mount (St. Mary's Church). These improvements were never executed but the document illustrates the kind of change to the ancient pattern of streets and frontage lines which were often carried out in the nineteenth century and are still popular with road engineers. The plan incidently records the shape of English St. from Loreburn St. eastwards





to include the junction of what are now St. Mary's Street (Edinburgh and Lochmaben Roads) and Annan Road (English Road). The form of the junction with Hood's Loaning (Hood's Lane) and positions of a few houses are also recorded. Since the improvements were not executed and the present junction is in the unimproved form shown on the plan, it seems likely that the layout of this part of the road pattern may be of considerable antiquity.

No. 5 Wood plan (1819) Figs. 18 and 19 .

The 'Plan of the Towns of Dumfries and Maxwelltown from Actual Survey by John Wood 1819' appears to have been the first properly surveyed plan of the town and its environs, and it was available for sale at Dumfries and Edinburgh in sheet form as well as forming part of Wood's Town Atlas. Fig. 18 shows the whole plan, but has been reduced to about a quarter of its area. It covers Dumfries from north of Townhead to Castledykes in the south and also shows the layout of Maxwelltown (formerly Bridgend) on the other side of the river. Compared with Roy's plan (No. 1) of 1752-3 it shows that almost no further expansion of the built-up area had taken place, and the medieval layout of the central area is readily discernable. The plan shows clearly the way that pressure for building space had led to the long narrow plots behind the houses being built up. This burgage 'repletion' is evident in all the blocks of burgages fronting the High Street and English Street except for that in the north-east where development of this kind in the island-block at the north end of the High Street seems to have overshadowed these properties. John Wood seems to have taken the trouble to find out about proposed improvements, and marks in broken lines, the residential layout proposed in Burn's plan (No. 3), the road junction improvement shown in Cowan's plan (No. 4), a new street eastward from the head of High St parallel with and to the south of Academy St, and new approach roads from the east roughly in the vicinity of Queen Street and Brooms Road but





on different alignements.

Fig. 19 is a slightly enlarged section of Wood's plan showing the town-centre. It shows clearly the form of the long narrow burghage plots in the centre contrasted with the square plots of property immediately outside the area of the medieval burgh. The sweeping curve of the wide High Street, the blocks of building built on the market place, the tortuous approaches through the streets at the southern end of the High Street and the isolated character of the Old Church and the group of houses around it, can for the first time be fully appreciated from cartographic evidence. In the market place 'e' marks the Fish Cross and 'd' the Mid Steeple. It is noticeable how advantage has been taken of the characteristic linear shape of the old burghage plots, to cut new streets through the medieval pattern at Assembly St, Queen St, St David's St (and the proposed street eastwards from St. Andrew's St), and to create a space for the 'Proposed new Market' on the eastern side of the market place. The way that these changes were facilitated by the pattern of the medieval layout is yet another aspect of its seemingly endless potential for adaptation. Wood's plan is valuable as a careful representation of the town's layout before the changes, such as the cutting of Church Crescent which destroyed the older layout to the east of the New Church, which came before the town was recorded by the Ordnance Survey after the mid-century.

No. 6 Parliamentary Boundary plan (1832) Fig. 20 .

As part of the preparations for parliamentary reform in the early nineteenth century a series of 6" to 1 mile town plans for Scotland were published in the Report of the Parliamentary Boundaries Commission (HMSO 1832) to show the recommended new boundaries. The series of plans is uniform in style and include more towns than those for which a convenient outline could be found in Wood's Town Atlas. They also show more of

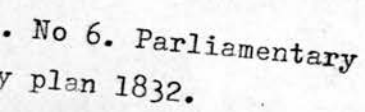
the roads and houses on the outskirts of towns than are shown on Wood's plans, so that they seem to represent the results of a campaign of surveying in towns for this purpose almost thirty years before an O.S. 6" to a mile plan became available for Dumfries.

The plan of Dumfries seems to derive some features from Wood's plan of 1819 or from a common source. For example the lines of the proposed new approach roads from the east are repeated although the roads were built later on different alignments. This plan omits the abortive junction improvement shown on Wood's plan. However it has a second branch to Truelovers Walk not shown by Wood. Unfortunately it shows a street as existing prolonging eastward the line of St. Andrews St, which did not exist, and had been shown as proposed by Wood. In general the street pattern and block layout of Dumfries is shown clearly and the conventional shading of the densely built-up blocks of the town centre makes the same omission of the north-eastern block as was found in Wood's plan.

No. 7 O.S. 25" 1st Edition (1858) Fig. 21 .

The Ordnance Survey published the results of their surveys in Dumfriesshire at several different scales, each with its appropriate density of detail. The 25" plan concentrates and selects from the information to be found in the 60" - and 10.56 feet to the mile plans, so that even the garden layouts of suburban villas are shown, but the plan is still at a scale large enough to represent features and areas accurately to scale. To some extent it was produced by reduction from these maps of much larger scale, and it provided for the first time at this scale a scientifically surveyed plan which could be trusted to show accurately a true representation of the features on the ground. It is an historical document of great value, and provided a reliable basis for exploring the layout of Dumfries before it was altered by more recent changes





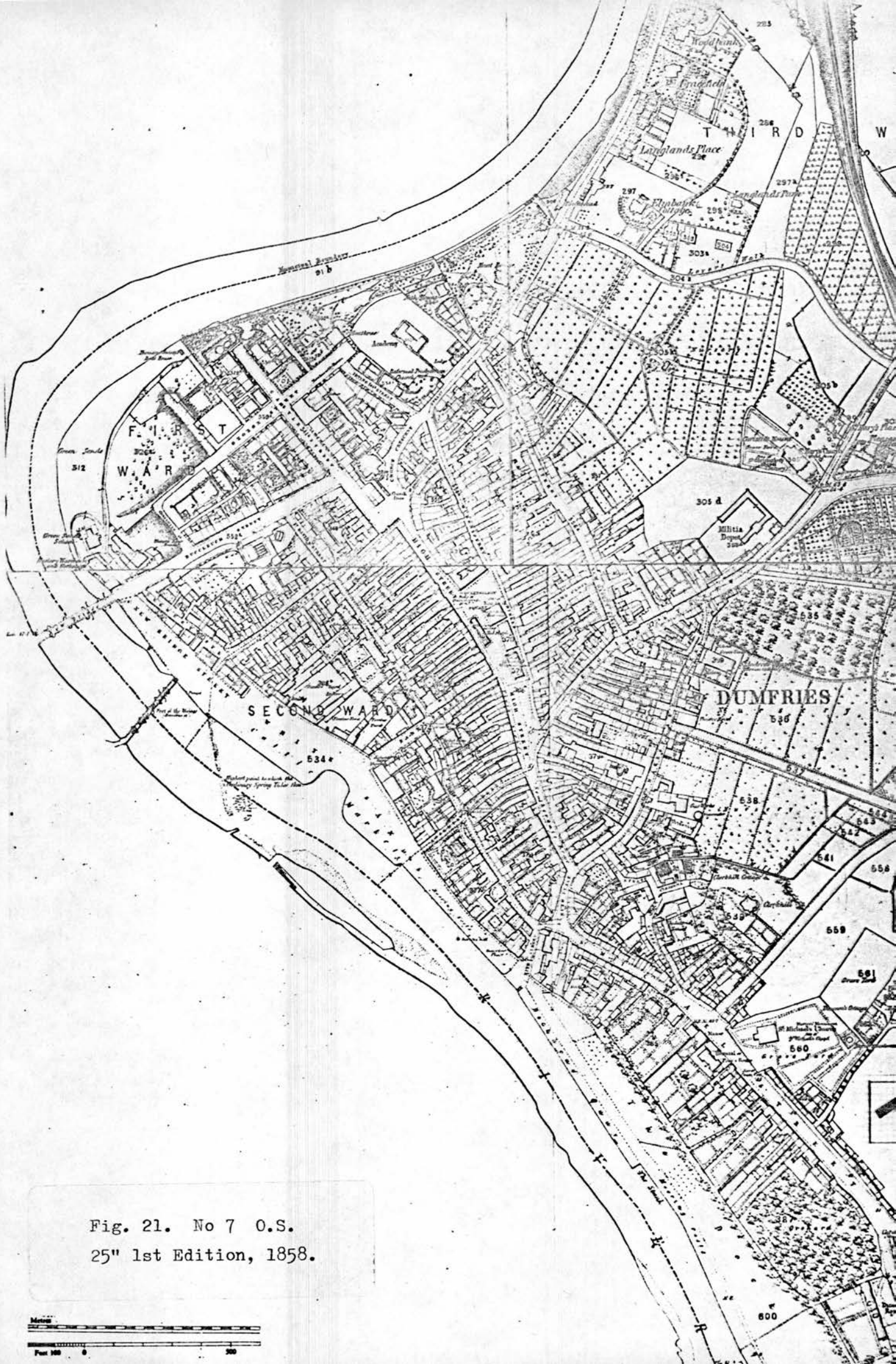


Fig. 21. No 7 O.S.  
25" 1st Edition, 1858.



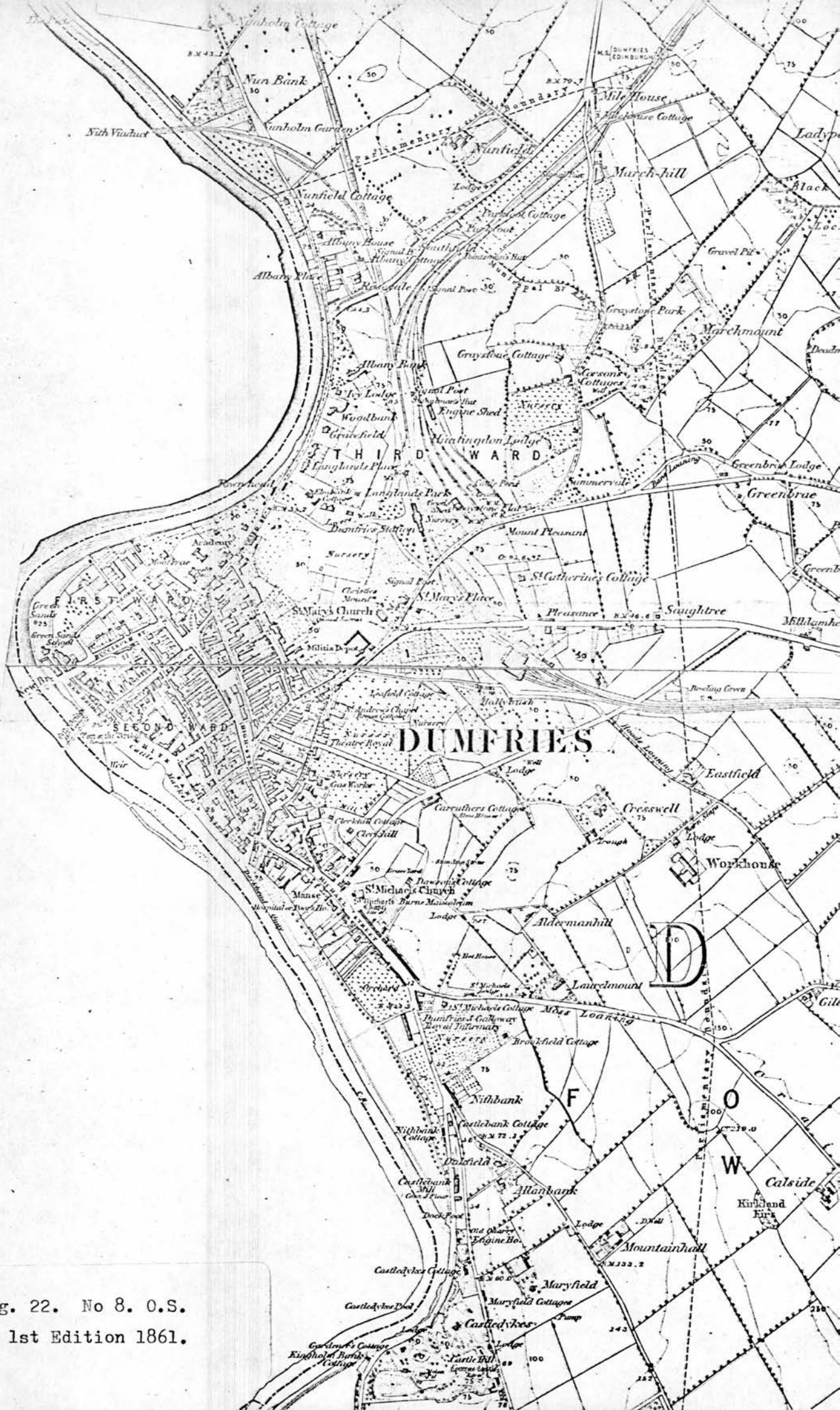


Fig. 22. No 8. O.S.  
6" 1st Edition 1861.

It will be noted that the area west of the River Nith is left blank on this 25" plan and on its 6" counterpart (No. 8). This is because in drawing this 'County Series' of plans Dumfriesshire was plotted on a map projection about a central meridian different from that for Galloway (O.S. Description pl. II). The result was that the maps of one county did not fit with those of another at their borders ; so that the areas were left blank on the sheets showing parts beyond the Dumfriesshire boundary. Fig. 21 shows the 25" plan of the town centre, reduced for convenience to approx. 1:5000.

No. 8. O.S. 6" 1st Edition (1861) Fig. 22 .

Fig. 22 shows the 6" to a mile plan of Dumfries which gives in miniature the layout of the 25" plan, with as much detail as fine engraving would allow. The Parliamentary Boundary is that shown on the 1832 Parliamentary Boundary report plan (No. 6), and the two plans are directly comparable. The area west of the river is left blank for the reasons explained for No. 7 above. Apart from isolated villas along the roads leading to the town, there appears to have been no marked extension of the built up area beyond the limits of the later medieval town.

No. 9 McDowall plan (1873)

A folding sheet 'Map of Dumfries & Maxwelltown for History of Dumfries' was published in the 2nd edition of William McDowall's History. It is essentially a street plan with the addition of conventional hatching for built up frontages. Public buildings and places of interest are marked and named. It is of limited use compared with the earlier and later O.S. plans but it does come usefully about mid-way between them.

No. 10. O.S. 25" 2nd Edition (1899) Fig. 23 .

The second edition of the O.S. 25" shows the town after the





Fig. 23. No 10. O.S.  
25" 2nd. Edition 1899.

'population explosion' of the late nineteenth century.

The central area is still little changed but it is hemmed in by new housing areas, a marshalling yard, gasworks and woollen mill. Both sides of the river are shown in this edition to complement the 25" 1st edition of Dumfries. The detail shown is however inferior to that of the 1st edition (No.7) , and buildings are shaded. Fig 23 is a photographic reduction of the 25" plan, showing the central area of the town at approximately 1:5000.

#### SECONDARY SOURCES

A number of reconstructions of parts of the former layout of Dumfries have been produced in this century and the more notable ones are listed below:

No. 11. J. Barbour (1918) 'plan of the Greyfriars Lands in Dumfries' (Barbour Greyfriars). This is based on measurements given in documents.

No. 12. G.W.Shirley (1915)

- a) 'Plan of Dumfries: 16th Century: showing Marshes, Burn's and Allurial Land' about 6" - 1 mile (Shirley Dumfries frontispiece)
- b) 'The Burgh's Focal Point' (ibid. 11)
- c) 'The Market Place' (ibid. 16)
- d) 'The Back Streets' (ibid. 24).

No. 13. J.D.Ballantyne (1925)

- a) 'Lower Nithsdale: Marshes' (Ballantyne Routes in Nithsdale Frontispiece)
- b) 'Lower Nithsdale: Older Tracks' (ibid.)

While at a very small scale these studies are quite useful.

No. 14. A.E.Truckell (c. 1968)

- a) 'Sites in Dumfries Mentioned by 1200' (Truckell Growth)





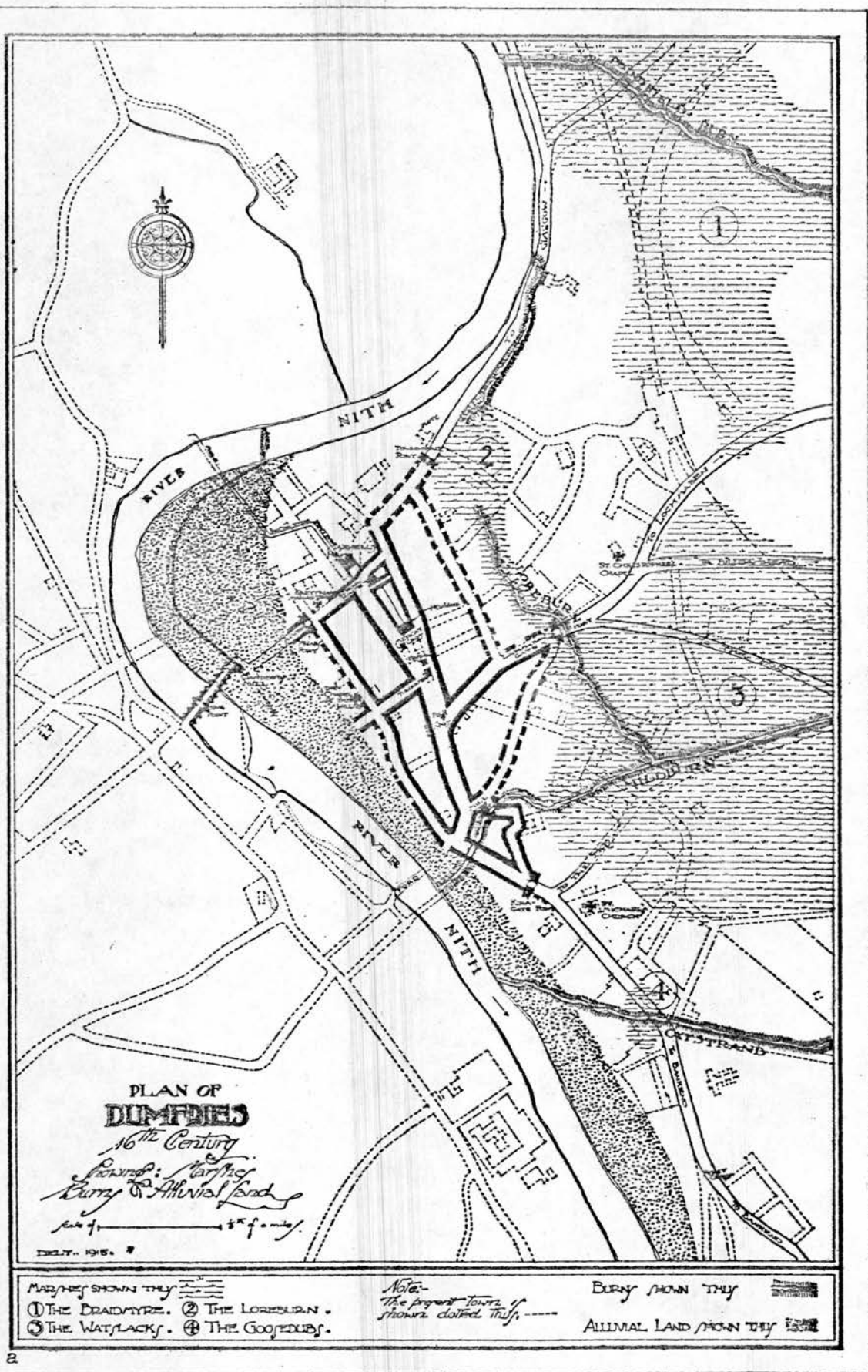


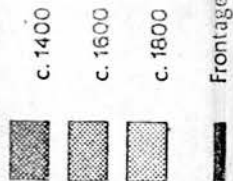
Fig. 25. No. 12 (a) G.W.Shirley (1915).





# DUMFRIES

## Burgh Expansion



- Extant buildings constructed by 1700:-
1. Midsteeple (by 1725)
  2. Globe Inn
  3. Devorgilla Bridge
  4. Bridge house

- ☆ Sites of important Medieval buildings:-
- a. Townhead Motte - possible sites
  - b. Crystal Chapel
  - c. Chapel of St. Thomas - possible site
  - d. New Wark
  - e. Market Cross
  - f. Tolbooth
  - g. Fish Cross
  - h. Greyfriar's
  - j. Mill
  - k. St. Michael's Church

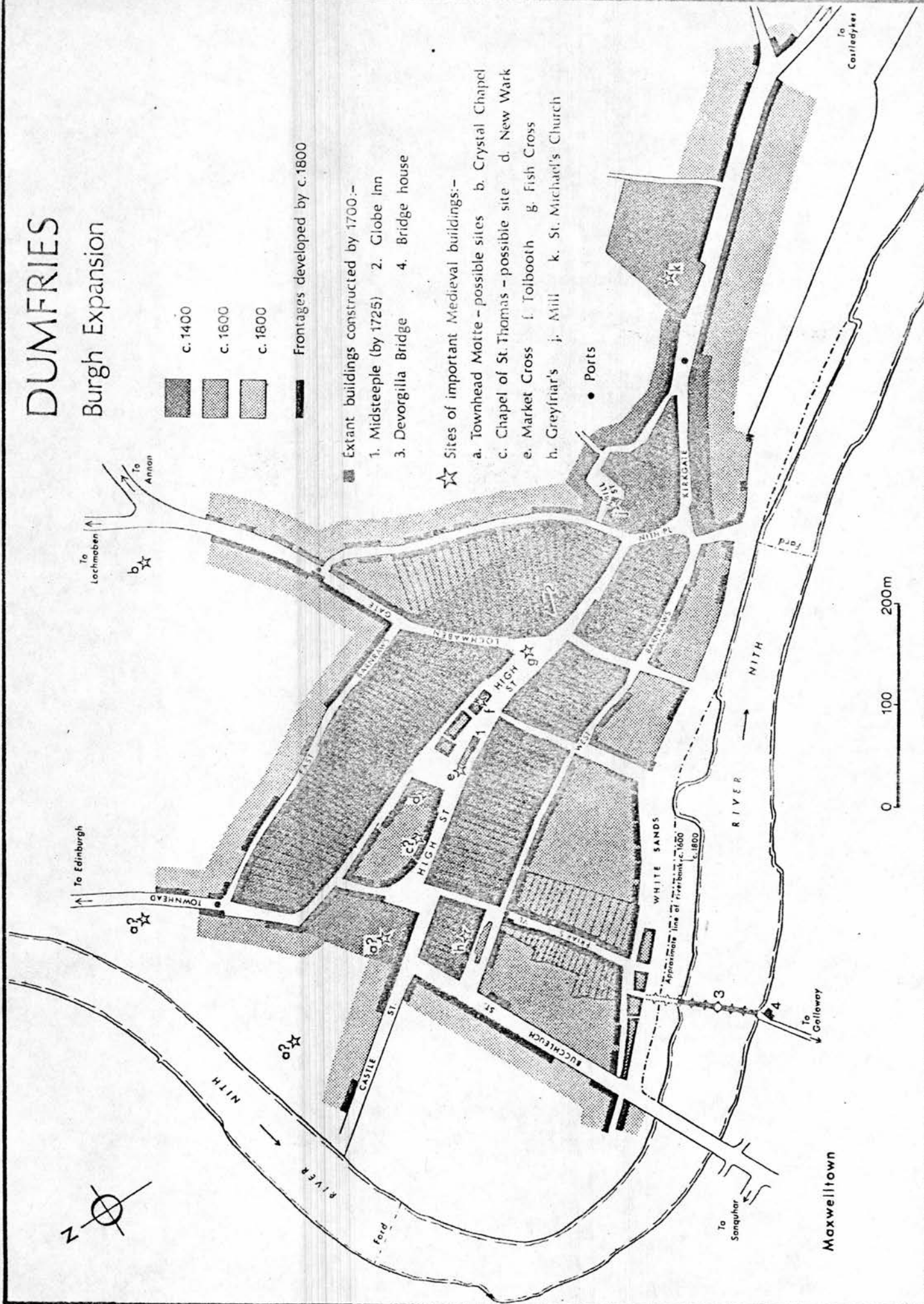


Fig. 27. No. 15 Robert Gourlay (1977).

- b) 'Dumfries about 1560 (after Shirley)' (ibid.)
- c) 'Dumfries & its surroundings about 1560 (after Shirley), (ibid.)
- d) 'Dumfries in 1715' (ibid.)
- e) 'Dumfries in 1819 (after Wood)' (ibid.)
- f) 'Dumfries in 1850 (after O.S.)' (ibid.)
- g) 'Dumfries & surroundings development 1850-1968' (ibid.)

These are a series of rough sketch plans poorly reproduced, but they contain useful information.

No. 15. Robert Gourlay(1977) 'Dumfries: Burgh Expansion'  
(Gcurlay & Turner Dumfries)

The suggestion here that English Street (Lochmaben Gate) was a secondary element of the plan, is rather unlikely, and this will be discussed below.

### EVIDENCE FROM THE TOWN'S LAYOUT

The cartographic sources of evidence for Dumfries as discussed in the foregoing section, are limited in chronological range and the lesser technical competence of earlier surveyors as shown in their plans, means that they are not directly comparable with the Ordnance Survey plans, which represent a cartographic watershed in the middle of the nineteenth century. From 1858 our knowledge of changes in the spatial layout of Dumfries is relatively exact: by using the earlier cartographic evidence and plotting the former arrangements they show on the O.S. base, it is possible to extend into the earlier period something of the exactness which a scientifically surveyed base plan can add to a mere reconstruction drawing. The fact that significant changes to the medieval layout of Dumfries came only in the eighteenth -and increasingly in the nineteenth centuries, and that these are the times when the cartographic evidence begins and becomes increasingly available, is due to their being different aspects of the same technological revolution. The changes from the more ancient pattern of the town plan at Dumfries are fairly adequately recorded in the plans produced at the time, and through a knowledge of them and interpolation in the O.S. plan it is possible to recover the older form of the town's layout with reasonable success.

This technique of map reconstruction had been used extensively by W.H. Johns for a number of years now to produce the plans of British towns published as part of the international project for producing a corpus of reliable plans of Western European towns as they were at c. 1800 (Lobel Historic Towns i). By applying modern survey disciplines and methods of revision to the compilation of ground features on an O.S. base, it is considered that he has been able to correct errors of earlier



surveyors and compile scientific maps incorporating all available evidence - cartographic, archaeological, and documentary - for various periods of the town's development from 1800 back to Roman times. Excavations and other observations, made since the 'Historic Towns' maps were drawn, have shown the general accuracy and reliability of the 'survey method' employed (Johns Explanation). The only Scottish town to have been published so far is Glasgow (Kellett Glasgow) but the plans for it also show features from periods before 1800, and the main plan is given at 25" to a mile as well as at 1:5000 which is the scale adopted internationally for the series. It is clearly a great benefit to historical research in a town for one of these elaborately plotted and superbly printed plans to have been produced for it, but the principal<sup>6</sup> of map reconstruction can also be applied in a more humble way to illuminate the development of any town for which a certain amount of cartographic evidence exists. The plans will admittedly be sketch plans and will not be so definitive but within these limitations some definite advances towards an understanding of the development of the town may be made. le/

The scale of 1:5000 is also the smallest scale which M.R.G. Conzen recommended should be used for the analysis of town plans (Conzen Town Plans 115). It represents distinct plots recognisably and still produces plans the whole pattern of which can be taken in at one time. In Figs 21 and 23 the O.S. 25" plan, 1st and 2nd editions, have been reduced to approximately 1:5000 (drawn scales are included for more accurate reference). If the Roy plan (No. 1, Fig 16 ) the earliest primary source is compared with the latest, the 2nd edition O.S. 25" plan (No. 10, Fig. 23 ) there are striking similarities which make it possible to distinguish on the later plan the elements of the inherited street pattern, and the extent of the blocks of properties ('street - blocks') having the greatest density of development (very much the same in both plans) which demarcate the traditional centre



of the medieval burgh.

### THE STREET PATTERN

The conception of the medieval street pattern has great simplicity but its laying out seems to have been complicated by the need to take within the burgh the pre-existing main route from the east (English Street, formerly Lochmabengate) and to accomodate the line of this as it traversed the site of the proposed burgh before approaching the ford at what is now Nith Place. The sinuous character of the streets is probably due in part to this circumstance and to the need to accomodate the pattern of the layout as concieved to the irregularities of the sloping site. Geometrical precision regardless of the character of the site concerned was not normally a characteristic of medieval town-planning. m/u

In essence the burgh consists of a great wedge-shaped market-place (see Fig. 28 ) flanked to east and west by elongated burgage plots. The market place is narrowest in the south where it joins Lochmabengate, and for the length of that old route lying within the burgh, its north-facing frontage was made use of and the same elongated burgage plots extend southward. The reference to the orientation of parts of the town in these simplified terms has some precedent in documents of the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, where properties are refered to as lying in the east part or the west part of the burgh of Dumfries (Reid Dumfries App. A. Nos. 6 and 11). h/

To the north the original layout was an area of what was probably then crown demesne land (see p. 73 above) and the southern edge of this is suggested by a dot-and-dash line on Fig. 28 folowing the northern frontage of Friars Vennal, St. Andrews Street and Academy Street. These streets, although presumably not so named at the time, seem to have constituted



a less important pre-existing route across the site, running up from the higher ford (which was later to be flanked by the medieval bridge) and passing northwards along the east side of the river. Outside the burgh to the east, at Townhead, this route was linked southward to the main route leading to Lochmabengate, by the winding track called Lovers Walk, which in its earlier form emerged near where there is now a road junction in front of Christie's Mount (see the Wood plan No. 5, Fig. 18 and compare sources Nos. 1, 6 and 7).

Back lanes ran round outside the burgh to east (Loreburn Street), west (Irish Street) and south (Shakespeare Street). These served from the rear the long plots or 'yairds' of the burgesses, allowing cows to be driven to the common pasture and fodder to be brought into their barns without these having to pass through the main streets of the town. At Dumfries the eastern and western back-lanes were generally termed in the sixteenth century 'The Yairdheids' and 'Under the Yairds' respectively (Shirley Dumfries 24-5), and later they were known as the 'East Barnraws' and the 'West Barnraws' up to the eighteenth century. The latter however had already been called 'Galloway gait' in 1519 (Reid Dumfries 233) and it was called 'Irish Gate' by Robert Edgar in 1746 (Edgar History 23). The southern back lane (Shakespeare Street) being at a lower level than the High Street like Irish Street was also termed 'Under the Yairds'. It appears to have been designed also to serve as a southern 'by-pass' to the burgh to facilitate traffic to the ford at the times when the burgh ports were closed, and to avoid herds of Galloway cattle in transit having to be driven through the main streets of the burgh at other times.

Within the area of the original great market-place there is now an irregular block of buildings at the northern end and additional isolated buildings in a line near the eastern side, they were termed collectively the 'Mydraw of Dumfries'



in 1510 (Reid Dumfries 231). The single buildings have resulted from public buildings being built on the market place from time to time presumably with royal permission and their having been put to commercial uses thereafter. The southernmost building has the site of the Tolbooth, the town-hall cum prison of medieval Dumfries, which was probably the first building to be built on the market place, other than the Mercat Cross. The irregular group of buildings covering much of the northern end of the old market place is the result of the process of market colonization commonly found in medieval towns (Haddington has a very similar wedge-shaped market-place largely infilled in this way). The cause of this late medieval phenomenon is generally attributed to stalls and shops within the space of the medieval market place being transformed into permanent buildings. M.R.G. Conzen suggests that at Alnwick such 'Blocks developed spontaneously from more or less isolated small buildings, shops and stalls by slow coalescence into close-grained, compact blocks distinguishable as market concretions from the surrounding older street-blocks ' (Conzen Alnwick 38). Clearly there was a growing demand for land with a central location in the later medieval period and at Dumfries as elsewhere this seems to have been met to some extent by building over part of the market place. However, the usual explanation of how this came about as given by Conzen, seems unlikely, at least for Scottish royal burghs. The close supervision of royal burghs by the crown, in the medieval period through the Chamberlain and later through the Privy Council, makes it difficult to accept that the loss of a third of the area of the king's High Street in this 'spontaneous fashion', would have been allowed. The apparent subdivision of the block into east-west plots and the situation there in the sixteenth century of one of the grandest houses in the burgh with a herb-garden attached (Shirley Dumfries 26), points to a more ordered process of market colonization as a deliberate step with royal consent. It may be presumed that the practical considerations which in the twelfth century made it necessary to provide so exten-

sive an area of market place at the first planning of the burgh, had changed sufficiently by the fifteenth or sixteenth century, to allow the then more populous burgh to manage with about two thirds of the former area of market place, without in any way compromising its commercial prosperity. If this were the case it would be open to the burgh to arrange for the surplus area to be feued on burgage tenure with the present result.

By convention in the medieval period a principal street was denoted by the suffix '-gait' or '-gate', e.g. 'Lochmabengait' in 1510 (Reid Dumfries 232), and a minor street was termed a vennel or wynd, e.g. 'Freir Vennel' in 1519 (ibid. 234). The eastern block of burgage plots (possibly the 'Backraw' since the street formed between it and the Midraw was so termed in 1579 (Reid Dumfries App. A. No. 35) ) seems originally to have been continuous from Academy Street down to Lochmabengate, without any vennels interrupting the series. King Street was cut through it halfway down in 1764. At the northern end of the western block, Friars Vennel took its name from the Greyfriars who had been established at the north-west corner of the market place by 1266 (E.R. i. 27). The vennel ran beside the southern wall enclosing their convent and then passed out through the Port of the Vennel to descend to the ford and later bridge.

A little more than halfway down the western block the series of long plots is interrupted by another vennel (Bank Street). In 1444 it was called 'the Venell which leads to the Water of Nith' (Reid Dumfries App. A.No. 11). At other times it was called Cavart's Vennel from an adjacent proprietor (Shirley Dumfries 30) and Stinking Vennel from a stream running down its centre making it popular with butchers. The vennel led down to the shingle area of Whitesands which was used as a cattle market. There was presumably a port to close off this vennel at Irish Street. The vennel was formerly narrower but was widened in 1753-4 (ibid. 34). Further down the western

block is Assembly Street which was formed in the period 1751-6 and at the end of the eighteenth century was called the New Entry (*ibid.*).

On the south side of Lochmabengait the series of plots between the southern port and the port at Loreburn Street was originally unbroken. Queen Street was cut through between 1756 and 1771 (*ibid.*). Queensberry Square was formed near the middle of the Midrow in 1764 by the demolition there of an ancient defensive structure called the New Wark, then already in ruins. The Mid Steeple, when it was built in 1704-8 on the western side of the street, broke with medieval precedent. Before this the western side had been kept clear of buildings except for the Mercat Cross (the legal and commercial centre point of the burgh) and the Tron (the public weigh-beam). After 1575 the Cross had been raised on a substructure occupied by shops (Shirley Market Cross 205, 210) but this seems to have stood in the otherwise open area of the market place. The Mid Steeple stands immediately to the south of the site of the cross and was formerly called the Tron-steeple. It received its present name some time after the building of the New Church at the head of the High Street in 1727 had added a third steeple to those of the Mid Steeple and of St. Michael's parish church.

The cartographic evidence is complemented by written records of the town-council so that together they make it possible to reconstruct the layout before these relatively modern changes. The Wood plan (No. 5. Fig. 19 ) shows the former widths of English Street and the street leading to Townhead which were improved by widening about 1826 (McDowall History 3rd ed. 711). Here again the older street pattern can be recovered, but there is an unfortunate lack of information on the layout of the area to the north of the High Street and Friars Vennel, the features of which were obliterated by the creation of Buccleuch Street as a raised approach to the New Bridge of 1794, and the streets needed to connect Buccleuch Street to



the High Street (Castle Street) and Friars Vennel (St. David's Street). Houses were cleared at the head of Friars Vennel in 1793 to make way for Castle Street. In 1798 St. David's Street was formed extending northward the line of Irish Street but replacing Bell's Wynd which apparently was the successor of a passage recorded in 1558 as running outside the western stretch of the Greyfriars' 'papal Walls' and giving access to the conventual buildings by a gate and steps (Barbour Greyfriars 31). The attempted reconstruction of this area by James Barbour, was noted as source No. 11 below, and when introducing evidence for the convent discovered subsequently, G.W. Shirley wrote that 'There is nothing in the new matter.... to disturb the general conclusions arrived at by Mr. Barbour, though some doubt as to the exact position of the Friary east and west must always exist from the removal of the two boundaries by the construction of Castle Street and St. David's Street, but at the most the dubiety is limited to a few yards' (Shirley Greyfriars 304). Reasoned conjecture may help to limit this area of doubt.

The rectangle of walls by which the Greyfriars convent was enclosed (muros nostros papales in a charter of 1558 (Bryce Greyfriars ii, 113) ) is defined on its south side by the line of the older route which became known as Friars Vennel. The line of the north side is suggested by James Barbour in source No. 11 but it may be possible to define this more accurately. If the Roy and the 2nd ed. O.S. 25" plans (sources Nos. 1 and 10) are compared it will be seen that the northern boundary of the garden layout to the former 'great house' of the Maxwells is indicated by Roy, and that there is a similar property boundary marked at the backs of the houses on the north side of Buccleuch St in the O.S. plan. This line probably represents the northern limit of the parcel of land purchased to create that street, as an approach to the New Bridge. This boundary is clearly marked on the Burn plan (No. 3) of 1806 being there the southern boundary of that land on which houses and streets were then to be laid out to the north (RHP.



1241). This seems to be a demonstration of the fact that the boundaries by which parcels of land commonly change hands are some of the most ancient features of the urban landscape.

The setting-out of the Papal Walls must have come almost a century after the burgh had been founded so that it is probable that their original grant of the site (not extant, but possibly from the crown?) defined their property in terms of its relationship to the existing features of the burgh. It may well have defined the east-west dimension as being the same as that of the standardized length of burgage plot in the west part of the burgh, and the only measured dimension required would then have been the extent northward from the vennel, if this were not also fixed in relation to some topographical feature no longer surviving. The simplest arrangement would have been to prolong northwards the lines of the east and west boundaries of the existing street-block lying to the south. This would mean that the western wall of the Convent would have been in line with the east side of Irish Street and the enclosure would not have had to be made any further down the slope than was absolutely necessary. As it was the Friars Steps indicate the raised level of the ground inside the western wall of the enclosure which James Barbour suggests may have been some eight to ten feet above the level of St. David's Street (Barbour Greyfriars 29).

Such a difference of level would also explain why, when in later centuries the friars decided to profit from their frontage to Friars Vennel by allowing houses to be built there there were only three of these. They were in a group at the south-eastern corner of the enclosure. They are indicated on James Barbour's reconstruction plan (No. 11) but it is noticeable that he suggests that a salient angle of the rectangle of the walled enclosure had projected into the High Street, and it was the frontage of this to Friars Vennel, from the corner westwards, which had been developed. A 'great stone house' had been built on the corner by 1519 (Reid Dumfries

App A. No. 22) but the group of buildings is not described as being at the head of the High Street, as they might have been had they occupied a prominent salient as suggested by Barbour. The houses are in fact described as lying "in lie Freir Vennelhede" (ibid.) which suggests that the south-east corner did not project and that the east wall of the convent enclosure was in line with the eastern frontage of the upper High Street.

In the later medieval period there is evidence that this eastern wall of the convent was also flanked by a road running northward from the head of the High Street to a minor ford across the river, called the Stakeford. A Town Council minute in 1525 described this as 'the King's Street extended to the Staikfurd' (Barbour Greyfriars 24) and the Friars when feuing off their land to the north of their Papal Walls in 1555 gave as its eastern boundary 'the gait or passage passing oute to Poliwadum, callit the Staitfurd' (Bryce Greyfriars 105). This land was bounded by 'the commoun landis of the burgh of Drumfreise, callit the Willeis, on the north' (ibid.) and the road to the ford would have had to cross this common land before reaching the river. It could therefore equally be regarded as leading to the common grazing of the burgh and have been termed the 'Cowgate'. In fact when the Town Council on 1 Dec. 1515 granted a Seal of Cause to the shoemakers of Dumfries they specified that the (street-) market for leather and made work was to be held in the 'Cowgate fra the New Well to the Greyfriars' (McDowall History 2nd ed. 314) which suggests that the attribution may be correct and that the shoemakers had their stalls at the end of the Cowgate leading out of the High Street.

On the eastern side of this street stood the great house of the Maxwell<sup>s</sup> often called the Castle, and by 1551 Lord Maxwell had received a feu charter from the Friars of the eastern part of their yard virtually adjacent to his house (Bryce Greyfriars 104) but separated from it by the street.

In 1569 the magistrates were granted by the crown all the lands and possessions in Dumfries which had belonged to the Greyfriars; by 1575 Lord Maxwell had taken the opportunity to consolidate his holding by acquiring from them the Conventual enclosure (Barbour Greyfriars 33) , and by the time the shoemakers had their code reenacted by the Town Council on 20th October 1595, they were no longer holding their market in the Cowgate (McDowall History 2nd. ed. 314). The presumption is that the 'right-of-way' over the Cowgate was suppressed by Lord Maxwell.

In 1570 the 'Castle' had been 'cast down' in Lord Scrope's raid but by 1500 it had been rebuilt and gardens were laid out to the north, which may be seen as they were in the eighteenth century in the Roy plan (No. 1). By the time of that plan (1752-4) the Castle had fallen into ruins and had been replaced by the New Church, built immediately to the north of the castle and opened in 1727. The land had been sold beforehand in 1715 and the Register of Sasines describes the property at that date as 'that waste ground whereon the Earl's Great House stands, with the high houses around the closs, now ruinous, with the great gardens at the back thereof, and the little yaird on the west side of the closs, together with the walk from the said garden to the river....' (Reid Dumfries 144n.). The Old Statistical Account in 1793 suggested that 'It is worthy of being mentioned, that, behind the New Church, and what is still called the Castle Garden, there is yet to be seen the deep tract of a road, leading for a space of 200 or 300 yards, down to the Nith. A causeway had been formed across the river here, by which the family at the castle could come and go, between it and their seat at Terreggles, without passing through any part of the town or its suburbs' (OSA v, 143). The foundations for the New Bridge were then being laid, and very soon after, the whole character of this northern part of the burgh was transformed. Something of this change was felt by the copyist of Dr. Burnside's M.S. History of Dumfries who wrote of this track in 1818 that

'The road mentioned.... now begins to disappear. As it is very probable that in the course of a year or two not a vestige of it can be traced, I beg leave to remark that it commenced about the western corner of the New Church, and passed to the west where the northern row of houses now stands. At the head of Buccleuch Street it passed under the northern wall of the above row of houses, and formed an angle so very near a right angle that it passes under the eastern corner of the westernmost house of the row. Thence it passed to the south in a sloping direction along what was then declivity of the bank, that it will pass most probably considerably to the west and south of the southern row of Castle Street. N.B. - Not a single house of the southern row is yet built' (Barbour Greyfriars 24). To understand this description it is necessary to consult the near contemporary Wood plan of 1819 (No. 5) and to regard Castle Street as running from east to west. The row of houses referred to are those continuing along Castle Street from the New Church. The track leading down to the Boat House beside the river on the O.S. 25" 1st edition plan (No. 7) and still today following this declivity between Castle Street and Gordon Street, may well be a rather regimented final section of this old road which led to the poli-wadum (literally the pole- or stake-ford).

This latin name used in a document in the vernacular suggests an earlier medieval origin for its use and for the ford, and presumably for the route to it. The very definite change of direction noted by the last observer, comes at the conjectured position of the north-east corner of the Papal Walls of the Convent (see Barbour's reconstruction plan, No. 11). The subsequent sharp swing to the west to get in line with the declivity leading down to the water makes it seem possible that this road was diverted eastwards from a more direct line, at the time when the Greyfriars came to Dumfries and as the walled rectangle of their enclosure was first laid out, in the mid-thirteenth century. It is not recorded when the Friarshaugh and the New Yards to the north and west were given



to the Friars, but together they ultimately formed a compact holding to which this road was the eastern boundary. It was presumably of at least the same age if not older. There is however an alternative explanation possible.

In the Old Statistical Account Dr. Burnside clearly regarded the Stakeford as an artificial and therefore possibly a recent construction, but he was writing after the level of this part of the river had been raised by the damming of the river by the present cauld below the Old Bridge. The medieval latin name probably indicates that it was in fact a natural but more difficult ford where in crossing it was necessary to keep to the line marked by a row of poles or stakes standing at intervals in the bed of the river. There is considerable force in his additional observation as to the convenience of having a private and direct route to and from the other side of the river for those occupying this northern eminence of the town. It may be conjectured that this ford served a sally-port of the motte-and-bailey castle of Townhead and its pre-Norman predecessor, in the period before the Castledykes site to the south of the town became the site of the king's new castle c. 1173. There is evidence from the eighteenth century of a surviving route from the town's common at the Greensands (the Willies of the earlier charter) running 'up the road of the high Haugh, to the Mount or Moat' (Edgar History 85). This would presumably have run up the declivity and then have branched off eastward from the Cowgate to reach the Townhead 'moat' hill. It may well be that the branch to the head of the High Street which made this a public way, dates only from that time after the founding of the burgh when the Townhead castle was found to be no longer necessary for its security and was possibly dismantled by the crown before being granted to the Maxwells c. 1300 (see above p. 81 ). The reservation by the crown at this time of the necessary strip of land for a link road to the High Street running along the east wall of the Friars Convent would

explain the way it is later found dividing the Great House of the Maxwells from the Convent. If this composite origin for the route is accepted it means that the Cowgate as a public way was probably created c. 1300 and that the north-east corner of the Friars' walled enclosure already laid out, determined the point where the road swung westward to approach the declivity running down to the Nith and the Stakeford. Of the two theories proposed for the origin of the Cowgate the second seems to be more plausible since it does not require that the public road, once established, should have been diverted. The virtual immutability of the street pattern once created is one of the most fundamental characteristics of medieval towns.

The street pattern of the central zone of Dumfries has been discussed in relation to the evidence it still provides for the arrangement of the medieval burgh in the period of its foundation and early development. Historical and cartographic evidence has been used to identify and eliminate later changes, and particular attention has been paid to the north-western sector where the approaches to the New Bridge and an early nineteenth century residential development had all but obliterated the earlier arrangement. Stages in the development of the burgh can best be recognised from an analysis of the plot pattern, but before attempting this exercise, the evidence for peripheral developments in the later medieval period along the frontages of roads leading into the market place will be discussed.

As discussed above the original street-pattern consisted simply of one great market place traversed at its narrower end by a curved section of a main road there called Lochmabengait. (High Street is a descriptive term rather than a name so that in 1563 a tenement was described as being bounded on the north by 'the High Street called Lochmabengait' (Reid Dumfries 120) ). With the simple terms of reference found in use in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries — west part:

east part: Lochmabengait -- it was not necessary to refer to the market place by name. By the time that the property records became much more numerous, in the sixteenth century, there was already a number of other 'gaits' lined by houses which were described as being within the burgh of Dumfries.

A.E.Truckell has briefly encapsulated his considerable knowledge of the economic progress of the burgh in the following paragraph.

'Dumfries..... after steady growth through the thirteenth century and a static period in the fourteenth had begun to develop again by the mid-fifteenth, partly on the strength of its large woollen and cloth export trade. Despite the borders wars this advance continued, with a set back in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Progress commenced again in the 1630's but was cut short by the civil wars. A limited prosperity after 1660 did not prevent a quarter of the town being ruinous in the 1690's, but vigorous trading effort from the 1680's onwards began to bear fruit from 1700 and the eighteenth century was a period of extensive and expanding trade'.

(T.S.A. Dumfries 38).

The comparative prosperity of more recent centuries has meant that much of what was built before has been swept away. However the plan remains and this is our most extensive artifact to survive from the early centuries of the burgh with which this study is chiefly concerned. Founded in the twelfth and having a considerable prosperity in the thirteenth centuries, the main investment in creating the medieval burgh was made before Robert Bruce slew the Red Comyn in the Greyfriars' church at Dumfries in 1306. The ensuing static period lasting up to the mid-fifteenth century presumably meant that during this time there was no incentive to expand the town beyond its twelfth century limits. Even with growing prosperity thereafter, money would first of all be invested in new houses and buildings and the better maintenance of the existing stock, all of which has long since been swept away. It is probably to the years about A.D. 1500 that we must look to see the then existing pressures for space in the burgh beginning to be met by ordered extensions of the built up area and of its

legal limits as defined by the town-ports. The documentary evidence beginning a little later normally records the new streets of the burgh only incidentally to identify the property concerned.

In this way a group of at least three tenements is recorded in 1510 as lying in 'the Sowtergait of the said burgh' (Reid Dumfries 232). This is the Soutergait in 1602 (ibid. 193) and the name denotes the street of the shoemakers. It appears to represent a southward extension of the buildings at the south of the High Street as far as the junction with the back lane (Shakespeare Street) approaching the ford. The distinctive pattern of the plots here will be commented on below.

A much more explicit case of a planned extension is the case of the Newtoun. The road leading westward from 'the Friars' Port to the water and bridge of Nyth', that is the extension of Friars Vennel from Irish Street downhill to the river, had land called the Frierhaugh and belonging to the Friars, along the length of its northern side. The land on its southern side from Irish Street down to the river seems to have been developed as a regular block of some fifteen tenements and to have been fully built up by 1st March, 1520 when by a charter John Logane, vicar of Kowen<sup>(Colvend)</sup>, granted to the parish of Sanquhar most of the row of tenements and the rents from the three others. They are described as lying in the burgh of Dumfries, adjacent on the south side of the king's street called lie Newtoun, and the house on the corner with Irish Street is said to be at Newtoun hede. The name Newtoun, the fact of unified ownership and the completed nature of the development point to a conscious exercise in town-planning, being recognised as such by contemporaries. It will be seen that the regular nature of the plots emphasises the planned nature of this development. The northern side of king's street of the Newtoun was developed a little later.



William Moir Bryce suggested that it was the Friars at Dumfries who had initiated in Scotland the practise of feuing or selling their lands, which practise had been authorised by the Pope in 1515 and 1526 'for the evident utility of their houses' ( Bryce GreyFriars 210 : Shirley Greyfriars 312). They had adopted this method as early as 1536 (Shirley *ibid.*) and proceeded to feu out the strip of land in the Friarhaugh facing onto the Newtown street as tenements from 1557 onwards (*ibid.* 308). The Newtown is now represented by the lower part of Friars Vennel west of Irish Street.

The Mill Burn runs in a hollow separating the slope on which the early burgh stands from the parish church on its hill to the south. It was early harnessed to drive the burgh's water mill at the Mill Hole, but this was a low lying floodable area and the road from the town to the parish church had to ford the Mill Burn near to the river and some way below the mill. The mill was situated in the Millgait (Burns Street), a side road branching off the road to the parish church south of the Mill Burn. During the sixteenth century a stone bridge replaced the ford. In 1549 some tenements were mentioned as standing between the Millgait and the Common Highway to the parish kirk (Reid Dumfries 236) and from 1561 tenements are recorded in the Kirkgait itself. G.W.Shirley has suggested that this sixteenth century development south of Mill Burn may have been terminated by a port in Kirkgait just to the south of where Millgait branched off (Shirley Dumfries 11, 32). He quotes a statement that a Nether Port was taken down in June 1641 as 'now useless to the town and likely to fall down' (*ibid.* 32) and identifies this with his conjectured port. Reference to the Roy plan (No. 1) of 1752-4 shows a port in the Kirkgait much further south in line with the re-entrant angle half way along the west side of the churchyard, and this is marked as the site of a port on the O.S. 25" 1st edition (No. 7). The fact that Swan's Vennel would have joined the road just outside a port in this position suggests that this is indeed the position of a port. The Roy plan indicates a

broad street and regular development outside this port to the south by the mid-eighteenth century, but the full extent of the development built in the Kirkgait area in the sixteenth century is not clear.

Charters of the sixteenth century show that the land on the north side of Lochmabengait outside the port was still open, at least to the east of where it crossed the Loreburn. The road is called the common highway leading to the burgh in 1566 and in 1584 the land at 'St. Christopher's Chapel' was described as 'marching with the common street entering at Lochmabengait port' (Reid Dumfries 116-7). In 1510 the three tenements on the north side of Lochmabengate at the west corner of the Yardheads road are mentioned (*ibid.* 232), but there is no reference to a port in this position, so that it had probably been rebuilt further east by this time. The new position of the port would presumably have been across Lochmabengate (English Street) on the west side of its junction with the back lane (Shakespeare St.), as long as there was by then a solid block of buildings and back walls extending the development on the south side of Lochmabengait eastwards to this point. This appears to have been another planned extension, this time from quite early in the sixteenth century, and its extent seems to have been determined by the space available between the existing roads.

As early as 1467 there is a record of several tenements in the town of Bridgend near Drumfries (*ibid.* App. A, No. 11) across the river, and outside the burgh's jurisdiction, and there was a mill there in 1494 (*ibid.* 198).

As late as 1508 the old general frame of reference was in use and a tenement could be sufficiently located as in the High Street by describing it as being 'on the west side of the said burgh of Dumfries' (*ibid.* 230). By the seventeenth century Dumfries had grown beyond the bounds of its early medieval

layout and this simple frame of reference had had to be abandoned. The town was then regarded as being divided into four quarters or wards, viz. the Townhead Quarter, the Cross quarter, the Lochmabengate quarter and the Kirkgate quarter (McDowall History 2nd. ed. 325). It is to be presumed that the late medieval expansion discussed above, leading to the building up of Kirkgate and Lochmabengait, had been consolidated and the town had almost reached the extent that it had at the time of Roy's plan of 1752-3 (No. 1) which marks the beginning of the cartographic evidence

If the area at the centre of that plan is examined, it will be seen that the general arrangement of the streets and blocks of buildings represents both an early medieval town-plan, and also the general arrangement which can be seen in the streets of Dumfries at the present day. The following excerpts from a description of the town by Robert Edgar writing in 1746 are similarly valuable in describing much of the medieval town surviving in his day and also in presenting information which would add to the appreciation of someone exploring the town today.

'The streets of the Town are, from the Townhead under this Moathill in three turns southward, the main street beginning at the Frier's Vennelhead down to the Cross and Midsteeple, and thence turning a little southward to the Southward port or gate, thence a little more south-west to the Milnburn bridge, and then south-eastward to St Michael's Work, the Old Kirk, lately rebuilt with the highest spire in direct line with the other two spires. The back streets are the Flesh Mercat on the north-east covered with the houses of the Mid-row from near the Townhead to the Coffee House; on each side of these streets are Lanes or Closses at the distance of 30 or 40 feet from one to another, leading down to the inhabitants' houses, yards, and barns. All these, like the teeth of a comb, have an issue, viz., those on the west side towards the water have an issue to the West

Barnraws from the Vennel Port, to the Rigs Chapel, now a Tannerie, called Irish Gate, where there are several new buildings with pleasant gardens. These on the north side, an issue to the north. These on the east side, an issue to the East Barnraws; leading from the Lochmabengate Port, backward to the Old Millhole Mill.

The other Walks, or refreshing turns, are from the foresaid Moat down by the river side & Greensands nigh which were the Brick-Kilns; then downward in a line the Whitesands, capacious of the Mercats of horses and black cattle, above and below the Bridge of the Town - The length of the town from Townhead Port to Catstrand is about a mile long of continued street, with 3 turns from Townhead Port to the New Kirk, as the main street thro' the Town' (Edgar History 23-4).

'There is a wynd or street called Lochmabengate from the Fishcross northward, which leads in two ways to the Moss & Bridge thro' it and to the Edinburgh Road and to Annandale, this is a pretty long street, having seven or eight closses, northwards towards the East Barnraws, and over against the entrance of this Barnraws there are eleven wynds or closses to the east leading to the Inhabitants yeards and barns under them. This street hath a port at the issue and was of old the way by which the people of Lochmaben came into this town and therefore so denominate. In this street there are several good buildings, and on the north beyond several houses & barns -- without the Port -- stands the ruins of the Old Chappel called Chrystal Chappel on a high ground .....

(ibid. 31)

'There is a long Vennel or street with closses at the back of it on both sides, called the Frier's Vennel from the Minor Friars (which belonged to the Cathedral called Dominican or Franciscan Convent) who dwelt in



this Vennel, which Convent is said to be built about the beginning of the twelfth century; within these 25 or 30 years the outer gate with old letters JESUS MARIA was standing, and the Administrators having (the Kirk being demolished) feued out parcels of ground for building to the Inhabitants, the said gate or place is rebuilt a second time' (ibid. 33)

'From this New Kirk down the Frier's Vennel there is a little turn westward, not above twenty yards, to the entry of the Bridge of Dumfries, which hath nine arches, and had one more, which is built up between the houses built by James Ross dyer on the left hand.... and the house of James Paterson.... on the right hand.... And it is a handsome Bridge, with a port in the middle of the river Nith (which is the march between Nithsdale & Galloway), which had till within these sixty years great Valves or Gates, which the Administrators have laid aside as troublesome' (ibid. 53).

In Robert Edgar's references here to the main streets each with a port at its exit from the burgh, and to closes, the passages into the long burgage plots at intervals of 30 or 40 feet down the sides of these streets like the teeth of a comb, he introduces this other important component of the medieval town plan at Dumfries.

#### THE PLOT PATTERN AND STAGES IN THE BURGH'S DEVELOPMENT

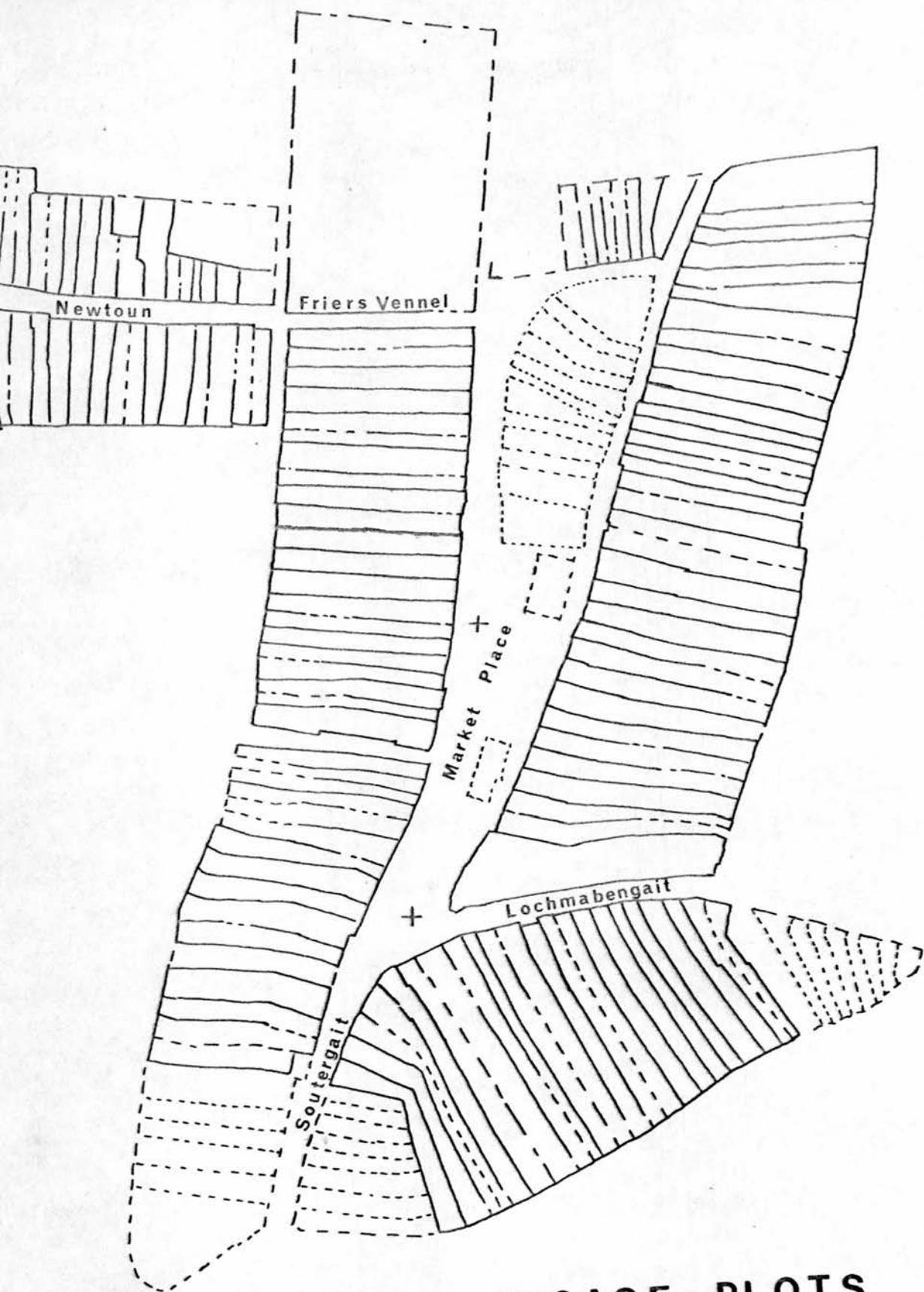
With a little practice, it is possible to take an O.S. 25" plan of any town of reasonable age and to read off from the plan which are the areas of modern council estates, Victorian villas, bye-law housing, and the developments typical of other periods. This is because the plot pattern employed was characteristically different at each period and these differences can be read in a town plan and the form of development deduced with reasonable accuracy. Where in an ancient town,

like Dumfries, the original buildings have long since disappeared, but markedly different groups of plot boundaries have survived, it can be taken that these groups of burgages were laid out at different times since they served the same purpose.

Robert Edgar, in the mid eighteenth century, wrote of the closes serving the long plots along the High Street and Lochmabengate. These would have started with a pend or passage under the fore-tenement facing onto the main street at the plot-head. He wrote that they led down to the burgesses houses (i.e. buildings in general) yeards (i.e. enclosures used for cultivated plots, stackyards for peats and fodder, gardens and open areas useful for a variety of crafts and manufacturing processes), and barns (which appear to have customarily been built at the ends or tails of the plots, since the back lanes serving them were termed the barn-rows). At this date in the post-medieval period the town appears to have still been pursuing a pre-industrial economy, which had developed naturally from that of the medieval period.

G.W.Shirley, who was acquainted with much unpublished documentary evidence for the burgh, sought (in 1915) to explain the uses served by these plots in the general medieval period. He suggested that, 'Each dwelling in the medieval burgh ordinarily had its yard behind or beside it. As each burgess grew at least a part of his own food, he had on this ground his barnyard, barn, kiln, and cobble or stone trough -- used for threshing, drying, and steeping the grain. We can still trace the lines of these houses and the depth of the yards' (Shirley Dumfries 24).

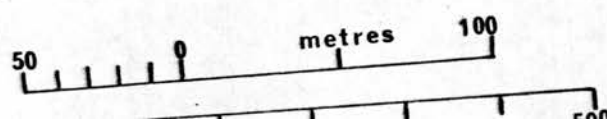
This is not the place to try to trace in detail the nuances of the gradual development of the burghal economy of medieval Dumfries. It is sufficient to say that during the four centuries following its foundation in c. 1166 the economic basis of the burgh must have undergone many transformations, as the



## DUMFRIES BURGAGE PLOTS

based on O.S. 25" plan 1858

Fig. 29



general economy of Scotland and of the burgh's tributary hinterland was developing. The graph of this development would be expressed in the built fabric of the town by new buildings at the peaks and by waste tenements and ruined buildings at the troughs, but the gradual changes in the trading practises and methods of working of the burgesses would be expressed at different times in a different conception of the desirable, or essential, characteristics of a burgh plot.

Mention has already been made above of the way that the great market place no doubt considered appropriate to the size of the burgh in the twelfth century, was able to be reduced in area by one third some centuries later and yet be adequate for the trading requirements of the larger population and more advanced economy of that time. A similar gross difference can be seen in the drawing of the plot pattern, Fig. 29 , between uniform plots laid out east and west of the market place in the twelfth century and those laid out on the south side of the Newtown in c. 1500. In the earlier period it is clear that it was considered necessary for a plot to have a frontage of about thirty feet to the High Street and a length sufficient to give the large plot area required for functional reasons at the time. A back-lane was also considered essential to the beneficial use of these long plots. By contrast the Newtown properties have much the same frontage-width but only half the length and area of the long plots. It is clear that in c. 1500 the operational area required in a burghal plot was very much smaller than that which would have been required three or four centuries earlier, and a rear access land was not necessary, even though one probably could have been provided quite easily for these particular properties.

Between the extremes provided by these two widely separated but clear examples from developments on open sites, there must have been cases of development each less easily differentiated from what went before and perhaps with a layout



partly conditioned by existing features and developments so that the result was less than what was thought ideal at the time. Where such development, as recorded in the plot layout, is not clearly differentiated, it is much more difficult to distinguish the stages and sequence of the development of the town-plan. However it is necessary to scrutinise carefully the characteristics of even apparently similar and adjacent plots if clues to yet earlier arrangements are not to be missed, so that any degree of differentiation however slight may well provide helpful evidence. To be able more correctly to estimate the possible significance of discontinuities visible in the plot pattern it is helpful to bear in mind certain general requirements which the town's layout had to meet, and also the procedures which seem likely to have been involved in its setting out by the surveyors.

The first of the general requirements of a medieval burgh, after a flatish and well drained market-place, a mercat cross and sufficient space for burgage plots, was a continuous enclosure of its perimeter. At Dumfries, and generally in Scotland, there was no formal town-wall but rather a composite perimeter formed by each burgess being required to build up in line with his neighbours' the wall or back-dyke at the end of his plot. The enclosure was completed by similarly building up the side boundaries of the end plots and by linking them by a port (gate) controlling access on each of the roads leading to the burgh. As originally designed the layout of the first stage of the burgh at Dumfries must have been enclosed by such a simple continuous perimeter, with ports in the appropriate positions. At each and every stage of the planned extension of the built up area of the burgh the perimeter had to be re-formed and new ports built if the additional area was to be included. The old ports may have remained as inner gates or have been demolished.

What may be termed the principle of the continuous perimeter

can be applied both to test the likelihood of any hypothetical stage of development of a town, and also as a predictive tool to suggest the positions of former ports and therefore of different stages of growth. Although a port may have been demolished the characteristic change of width of a street (narrower within, wider outside) indicative of a port may be found. The plot pattern is likely to show a discontinuity of plot type on each side of the street in line with the position of the port. Finally it is helpful to remember that road junctions were normally outside a port rather than within it. ( It is unfortunate that G.W.Shirley in his influential essay on the burgh in 1915 (Shirley Dumfries 24) gave a conjectural reconstruction plan (No. 12 (4) above) marking the ports in positions which fail to meet the criteria suggested above, and including the back lanes as if they were within, rather than outside, the burgh's perimeter.).

From later practise it seems likely that the surveyors responsible for setting out the medieval town-plan at Dumfries were termed Lynors and that they proceeded to 'stob and nog' (drive in stakes and mark out the line between them) along the boundary lines of the development in a methodical sequence. The title of liner may derive from the results of the work but it may equally have arisen from the use of a cord marked out and used like the modern surveyor's chain for setting out plots. Some such instrument seems to have been essential to the work at Dumfries.

The decisions in laying out the early stage represented by the upper High Street flanked to east and west by the long burgage plots, are likely to have been taken in the following sequence:

- 1) Site the market place on a convenient flatish shelf about midway between the marshy Loreburn and the river.
- 2) Set out the frontage lines of the burgages to east and west and calculate the depth necessary to achieve a preferred area assuming a standard frontage of about

30 feet, and mark out the line of the back dykes parallel with the frontage.

- 3) deal with the problems arising from existing topographical features cutting through the area for the proposed plots (these having been acknowledged in stages (1) and (2) by setting out the general disposition to minimise conflict).
  - a) On the eastern side set out the southernmost plots to follow the curve of Lochmabengate, but by tapering the tails and straightening the plot boundaries progressively as each is set out moving northward achieve the standard parallel plot at right angles to the High Street by eight or nine plots from the south. To allow for the loss of area due to tapering the plots along their length, make the affected plots progressively longer towards the south by adjusting the line of the back dykes in this section.
  - b) on the western side mirror the sinuous double-curve of the stream (originally) running down Bank Street in the plot boundaries set out to north and south of it (redevelopment has now straightened the street's outline). To the north, end the curve in the plot boundaries abruptly at the third plot (why?). The northern boundary of the fourth plot is straight in conformity with the plot-series to the north which is set out to follow the Friars Vennel and then gradually made to assume a regular plot form at right angles to the High Street.

It is always useful to consider the practical difficulties which must have arisen in setting out on the ground the intended plots, and to try to understand the customary ways they had of overcoming them. They seem to have taken a pride in maintaining a standard area in plots of varying outline, and in achieving a smooth and gradual transition from irregularity to straightness in successive plot boundaries. A plot of

unusual area or 'an abrupt change in the form of successive boundaries should be regarded as irregularities requiring explanation. It is now proposed to analyse the medieval plot pattern as shown in Fig. 29 to distinguish the main stages in its development.

### I : The Long-plot Period

The characteristic length of the series of plots around the High Street and on the central part of the south side of Lochmabengait (English Street) indicate a first period of development, clearly differentiated from all subsequent ones. The planned nature of this development comes out most clearly in the northern block on the west side. The regularity of these plots as originally planned is recognised in a property deed of 1280 which speaks of 'my full toft in the west part of the town of Dumfries (Domfres) which lies between the ground of Robert the son of Avelin and the ground of Ralph known as William son of Peter and extending in length to the measure of the other surrounding full tofts' (Reid Dumfries App. A. No. 6).

The limits of the development to the north are clearly Friars Vennel on the west side (the port may have been at the head of the vennel or at its foot as later) and Academy Street on the east side (the port being in line with the frontage, or with the back dykes as on the west side). The southern limit is clearly indicated on the west side by a sudden widening of the street at a point where plot boundaries with a double-curved shape stop and are replaced to the south by a plot series of lesser depth and rigidly rectangular shape. Immediately opposite this point the layout of the series of long plots south of Lochmabengait has been deliberately contorted to a dog-leg shape (while maintaining the proper area) so as to bring the southern boundary of the last plot in line with the port and the discontinuity on the western side of the street. This is presumably the 'Southward port or gate' referred to by Robert Edgar (Edgar History 23),



in the excerpt quoted above. It was presumably an inner-port in his day (1746).

A similar but smaller angular bend in the eastern plot boundary marks the limit of the Lochmabengait plot series to the east opposite the back lane now called Loreburn Street. The east or Lochmabengait port will have been across the road and attached to the western corner of the back lane (continuing the perimeter marked by the back dykes of the plots on the east side of the market place).

It will be noted that at both the Southern port and the Lochmabengait port the end buildings of the Lochmabengait plot-series, seem to have extended beyond the corresponding buildings opposite so that the port itself must have been set protectively in a re-entrant angle. People outside the gate could have been overlooked from the projecting building and the gate itself be protected if necessary. This simple arrangement for protecting a town gate by setting it in a re-entrant angle may have had a long history in Scotland as it is also found at the Potterrow port on the middle section of the Flodden Wall at Edinburgh.

The vennel leading to the Water of Nith (Bank Street) must also have been controlled by a port, since it led directly from the riverside to the mercat cross. If it were sited in line with the back dykes of the northern block, it also would have been set in a re-entrant angle. However it is most unlikely that there was any development fronting onto Bank Street (or Friars Vennel or the north side of Lochmabengait) so that the port could have been set in line with the High Street frontages or at any suitable position up this vennel. The stream running down the centre of the vennel no doubt complicated matters somewhat.

The period of development in the burgh characterised by the use of long-plots may represent a single stage of c. 1166,

but there are certain anomalies in the layout which suggest that at least two stages may have been involved.

1) In the block of burgages on the east side of the market place, the last few plots at the northern end follow a different alignment to those to the south. The funnel-shaped plot between the two groups may be a cause rather than an effect of this discontinuity. Such a space - wider to the outside and narrowing to the market place - may be the result of a pre-existing routeway having been accommodated in the layout and then made redundant by a subsequent extension of the plan. A route to the east in this position would have continued the line of Friar's Vennel and presumably would have provided a northern limit to the earlier layout. Outside the burgh it would have had to swing northward to gain the higher ground at the foot of the Townhead moat, and the different alignment of the northernmost plots, and of Academy Street in the extended layout, may have been generated. m/

2) The pre-existing main route of Lochmabengait makes for the ford at Nith Place but there was another main ford on the line of Friars Vennel, and Lochmabengait as the principle route from the east and north ought perhaps to have some direct connection to it before the burgh was interposed. The last surviving plot boundary at the south end of the east side of the market place has a curious change of direction which is perhaps more than can be accounted for by corrections to bring the head of the plot at a right-angle to the market place. The frontage breaks forward immediately to the south and the elongation southward of the corner of the block does not conform to the right-angle corners to blocks achieved elsewhere in the layout. These features are consistent with there having been a branch of Lochmabengait continuing westward and retained in use when the burgh was first laid out, but subsequently obliterated by an early extension of the burgh. It would have formed the southern boundary of the earlier layout.

3) Linked with the line of the conjectural western branch of Lochmabengait suggested above, may be another funnel-shaped plot ( the seventh below Bank Street) west of the market place and the shorter and wider plots to the south of it as far as the Southern port. The evidence on this western side of the town is consistent with the conjectural western branch of Lochmabengait having formed the southern boundary of the earlier layout and then swung north-west to Whitesands and the ford.

4) The fourth plot north of Bank Street is again funnel-shaped and an abrupt discontinuity in the plot pattern. A track in this position would account for the slanting north boundary of the plot west of Irish Street (which was later occupied by the chapel of the Willies), and would have provided a convenient access from the riverside to the vicinity of the mercat cross. This of course presupposes that in the first phase of the Long-plot Period the western branch of Lochmabengait was too near to Bank Street for the vennel in that position (always made difficult by the water course there) to have been required. This more northern track would have been more central to the early market place. When the burgh was extended southward, Bank Street would have been created as a substitute access to the northern ford in place of the western branch of Lochmabengait. The older track so near to Bank Street would then have been redundant and its site may have compensated the burgesses disturbed by the creation of that 'Vennel which leads to the Water of Nyth' (Bank Street) which was recorded in 1444 (Reid Dumfries App. A. No. 11).

If the hypothesis constructed to explain these apparent anomalies in the plot pattern is accepted, then the Long-plot Period should be considered to have probably two stages, which may be loosely correlated with the 'Foundation Period' and the period of 'Early Development' discussed in Section 5 above. In terms of the medieval layout the two stages would have been

as follows.

### Stage 1

The original burgh layout will have consisted of a wedge-shaped market place with blocks of burgage plots to east and west with back lanes serving their back dykes and linking the minor road in the north (running through the broad end of the market place) to Lochmabengait in the south and its western branch (running outside the burgh). The bailey of the king's castle at Townhead will have formed the northern boundary of the burgh, and ports controlled the roads leading into the market place here from east and west. The port to the south would be in a wall closing that end of the market place, rather like the surviving port and wall across the broad South Street at St. Andrews.

### Stage 2

The burgh will have been expanded to roughly twice its former size by taking Lochmabengait within the built-up area and developing its frontage. The back lane provided for its plots also served as a by-pass on the route to the main ford. These plots were designed for a port linking to the extended line of the back dykes of the properties east of the market place and for a new Southern port to which the plot-series west of the market place was also extended, over the former western branch of Lochmabengait. Bank Street was formed to give alternative access to Whitesands and the northern ford, and a smaller access to the north of it was suppressed. Similarly a block of land at the north end of the east side of the market place may have been taken into the burgh and a new access route formed to the north of it, the former route being suppressed. The Tolbooth seems to have been sited on the axis of Bank Street so that its erection may be associated at the earliest with this second stage. The mercat cross set on a small mound has probably always been in the same position, but the site of the Fish Cross at the mouth of Lochmabengait, now marked by a fountain, may be a symbol of the composite



nature of the early burgh. There is a similar arrangement at Ayr where the mercat cross stood in the Sandgate, the older part of the burgh, and the Fish Cross was sited in the High Street opposite the bridge in the newer part. Ayr went to the extent of having separate Tolbooths also but Dumfries seems to have had only one, but that midway between the crosses.

The consistency with which the planning principles used in the original layout (Stage 1) of the burgh at Dumfries, were carried over into the extension doubling its area (Stage 2), so that the two read together as a single layout distinguished from surrounding development by the long-plot form, makes it unlikely that the stages of development were separated by more than one or two generations. If the original development dates from c. 1166, the second stage must be dated to c. 1200, that is to about the time that William I was planning the burgh of Ayr and creating a layout there which doubled the area of what was probably an existing settlement on the Sandgate leading to a ford across the river (Dodd Ayr 305, 356). Philip de Valognes was the king's Chamberlain, responsible for supervision of the king's burghs, at that period and he had also been Chamberlain in 1166 and associated with the office in the meantime, so that the consistency observed in the planning of the two stages of the king's burgh at Dumfries may well be due to their both having been planned by the same official for the same king. William I died in 1214 and Philip de Valognes in 1215, so there is some reason to suggest that the second stage at Dumfries should be dated before 1214 and probably c. 1200.

## II Short-plot Period

By the same token that the long-plot form distinguishes an essentially early medieval form of development the short-plot-form can only have been acceptable to those with a completely different set of values, and sufficiently distanced in time from the Long-plot Period, for this revolution in

normal domestic requirements to have taken place. It is likely that the space-requirements occasioned by the prosperity of the thirteenth century were met by intensification of use within the existing layout. Development of the burgh's economy only became marked again in the mid-fifteenth century, and continued into the later sixteenth century. It is from this period that there is evidence for an increasing number of stone houses (see p. 62 above) and the short-plot Period would seem to be dateable to c. 1450 - c. 1580, i.e. extending virtually to the end of the medieval period.

Development in the Short-plot Period was on the whole supplementary to and conditioned by the morphological framework of the existing layout created in the previous period. It consisted of peripheral developments, market infill, a two stage development in the Newtown, subdivision of plots to develop blank frontages of existing streets, and cramped developments south of the Mill Burn and on Chapel-hill (which last is the passage cutting through the market infill). If the type of plot found in the development on the south side of Newtown, dated to c. 1500, is taken as a standard for comparison, then the regular straight-sided plots on the west side of Soutergait, outside the Southern Port must date from the sixteenth century also. Not so the close spaced but curved plot series opposite which are characterised by gradual adjustment by the surveyors of the plot boundaries to manage the transition from the curve of Shakespeare Street to the straight plot boundary to the north. The techniques employed here are reminiscent of the early medieval period. The layout probably dates from the mid fifteenth century and consists of infill between the existing boundaries and streets.

Compared with the areas provided by either of the plot series in Soutergait, the plot-series in the angle of the roads at the east end of the Lochmabengait long-plot series, must be regarded as mean and substandard. They also have radiating straight lines as boundaries which points to a late date, and

there is a hiatus next the last long-plot which perhaps marks an earlier extra-mural lane extending the back-lane on the north to meet Shakespeare Street. As discussed above (p. 181 ) this development seems to have been completed and the port moved eastward by 1510.

There is a block of similarly mean and radiating plots in the block at the head (north) of the High Street and shown to the east of the New Church on the Roy plan (No. 1). These could represent a uniform speculative development by the Lords Maxwell who had their great house next door to the west. On the evidence of the plot-pattern it may possibly date from c. 1510 also, but this land does not seem to have been available for development at an earlier period.

The untidy variety of plot width and length shown by the development on the north side of the Newtown, must reflect unco-ordinated piecemeal development as the Friars sold or feued the individual plots from 1557 onwards. The depth of the majority of the plots may originally have been constant, but the evidence has been largely destroyed by later developments on the south side of Buccleuch Street and the west side of St. David's Street.

As discussed above, the Mydraw of Dumfries, presumably including all that area of the original market place now colonized by buildings, was recorded in 1510. This colony is a layout probably executed in the fifteenth century and it has a definite plot plan. There are two plot series each running roughly east-west but they are separated by a space of irregular width which appears to have become filled in by later buildings leaving only a narrow through passage. At the northern and southern ends the plot divisions have been lost in later redevelopment, but the remaining plots appear to have had much the same proportions as those laid out on the south side of the Newtown in c. 1500. This might suggest that this market infill may date from the later fifteenth century.

Although tenements are recorded in the Millgait in 1549 and in Kirkgait from 1561 the plot pattern in this area south of the Mill Burn is one of small elongated plots subdividing the areas between the contorted pattern of streets. The tenements appear to have been designed to put as many houses along the available street frontages of the plots as possible and they appear to have had restricted garden ground provided. There is an abrupt southward termination in Kirkgate a little way north of the junction with Millgait, and it appears that this may have been the position of an outer-port, possibly before the one further south was built by the churchyard wall. The detached houses with large gardens lining Kirkgate (St. Michael's Street) to the south are not part of the story of medieval Dumfries. The plots on the riverward side of Kirkgate must have been of much shorter length before the reclamation and embankment of the river bank there.

Another form of development in the short-plot Period was to transform some of the long plots of the central area. This was done not by halving their length and developing the frontage to the back-lane --- in fact the back lanes have never been developed in this way, which may be a continuous tradition from the early medieval town. In fact the long plots were always subdivided lengthwise (see Reid Dumfries 225). The method of development involved using for small plots, for the first time, the side boundaries of those plots which bounded the streets within the burgh. The unit of planning in the Long-plot Period was a plot with a house at the head and buildings and gardens down the length of it. Those plots at the extremes of blocks were just the same and there was originally no development along the frontages on the north side of Lochmabengait, the north and south sides of Bank Street, the south side of Friars Vennel nor that at Townhead. As late as 1444 the plot along the north side of Bank Street was subdivided lengthwise by its owner who then sold off the



half fronting Bank Street. The reason why the important thoroughfare of Friars Vennel had always retained the name suggesting a street of less importance, may well be that the blank side-wall of the plot on its south side faced the high stone wall of the Greyfriars on the other side during the whole of the medieval period, and there was no development fronting the street except for three houses on the north side at the Vennelhead.

The north side of Lochmabengait is another matter. This was one of the major streets of the burgh and the frontage clearly presented an opportunity to create a series of valuable small plots, once the period had passed when it was felt essential that some open ground go with every property. It is clear from the property records discussed already, that by 1510 the north side of Lochmabengait had been developed with tenements right up to the corner with the back lane. From the space taken up by the general depth of the plots at least two of the large-plots must have been involved in this re-apportioning of land. It is not clear when the blank frontages to the vennels and Townhead were similarly transformed but it seems likely to have been after the end of the medieval period.

The positions of the town's ports in the short-plot Period is not at all clear. For the visit of the Queen in 1563 the Burgh Court Book records that both the Bridge Port and the Friar Port were refurbished, and as late as 1666 the Town Council ordered ' a strong barrier port with a wicket and a doore on the brig(bridge) as it was in former times' (Shirley Dumfries 51). There seems to have been a system of outer- and inner-ports. The function of the outer ports where they were provided would be to take toll on all the goods and animals brought into the burgh for marketing. The inner ports may have been intended to secure the centre of the town at night, but the need for this may have seemed less important at times. It appears very likely that the Nether Port removed as useless and likely to fall down, in June 1641 (which G.W.Shirley

suggested was in the Kirkgait (ibid. 32) ) was the <sup>outer</sup> port <sup>later found beside the Parish Church</sup>. The Friars Vennel port appears to have survived in its original position, but the Bridge port acted as an outer port. The Townhead port may itself have been moved out beyond the line of the back lane at the same time that the Lochmabengait port was moved eastward (i.e. by 1510). The marshy area flanking the Loreburn between these two ports may have provided an effective deterrant to unauthorised entry. There is no way that an outer-port in the Kirkgait could have formed part of a continuous closed perimeter to the burgh since there was no development on the west of Irish Street to close the gap on that side. The Southern port must have been regarded as the port on the south closing up the market area. From the plan of the burgh it is likely that there must always have been ports to control entrance to the burgh by Bank Street, and by the Cowgate leading from the Stakeford in the north, but these do not seem to figure in the records.

During the century and a half of the late-medieval short-plot Period a variety of developments took place but these do not fall into any intelligible sequence. It is a period roughly equivalent to that of the 'Later Developments' discussed in a previous section, and is of lesser interest than the earlier periods for the purposes of the present study of the medieval town-plan at Dumfries.

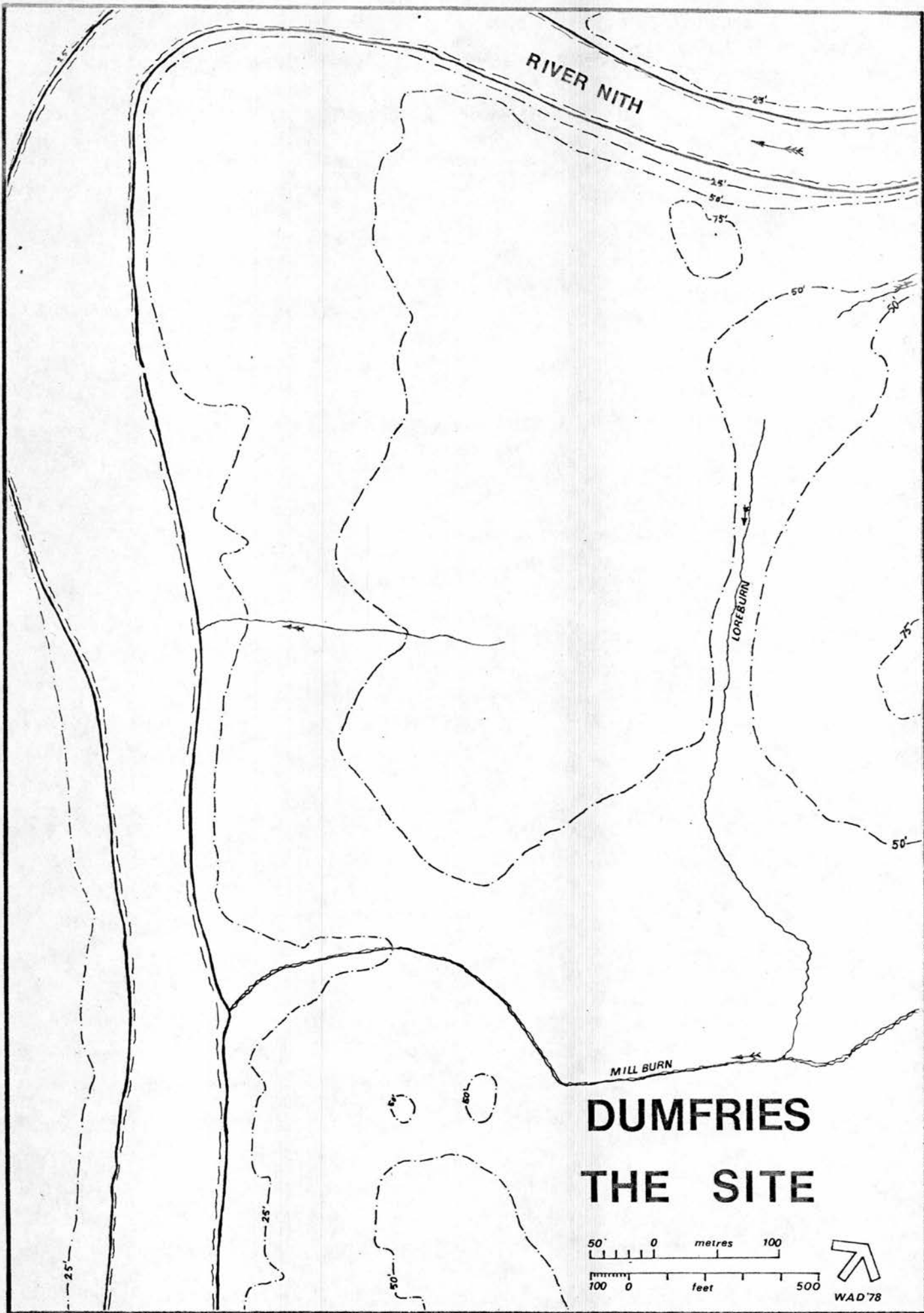


Fig. 30.

## THE SITE OF DUMFRIES

The influence of the contours of the site has been implicit in the discussions of the ancient roads making for the fords and on the original layout of the streets and burgage plots. It is now appropriate to deal with the site in greater detail as a preliminary to reconstructing the development of the town. In the section above on the setting of Dumfries the position of the town between the River Nith on the west and the Lochar Moss on the east was discussed together with the way it stands in an eastward bend of the river providing an elevated site conveniently close to the strategic river crossings into Galloway. In the section on buildings and structures of the pre-burghal period it was suggested that the 'fort in the brushwood' giving its name to Dumfries, had stood at the north end of the present town on the high bluffs above the river. This presumably had enclosed the natural hillock which was later transformed into the Townhead Motte, probably for Radulf son of Dunegal, lord of Strathnith. He had possibly used this ancient enclosure in its commanding position as his demesne centre, the administrative and legal caput of his lordship, and it would provide the second part of the new motte-and-bailey castle. The burgh was subsequently built on the adjacent land sloping up from the Mill Burn to the south.

Figure 30 opposite has been orientated a little askew but its top will continue to be referred to as north. It shows the position of the Townhead Moat (the hill on the site of the motte) on the river bank in the north-east encircled by the 75 ft. contour (above the current O.S. datum). The hill-spur providing an elevated site for the parish church of St. Michael the Archangel is shown by the 50ft. contour projecting



from the southern margin of the plan. The Crystal Mount, the hillock formerly used as the place of execution but occupied from the early fourteenth century by the Seton memorial chapel, is marked by the enclosing 75 ft. contour on the eastern margin. The hill-spur site of the parish church is the northern extremity of the main Craigs Ridge to the south. The site of the early burgh to the north and mainly limited to the shelf above the 50ft. contour, is separated from the parish church by the low-lying area traversed by the Mill Burn. The burn could be forded near the riverside.

The eastern limit of the site of the town was defined by an extensive marshy hollow, lying below the 50ft. contour. From this marsh a small burn ran north-eastward to fall into the Nith but it was chiefly drained by the Loreburn which ran southward amidst marshes to join the Mill Burn. The Townhead Moat stands on the narrow isthmus between the marshy hollow and the steep river bank to the north, and it commanded the less important route running northward beside the river. The main route, as it approached from the north-east, kept to the higher ground and skirted the south side of the Crystal Mount but had to ford the Loreburn to reach the site of the town and the fords to Galloway beyond.

The contour nearer to the river marks a line 25 feet below the 50 ft. contour and indicates the quite steep gradients of the slopes westward from the town site down to the river. This steepness would make them unsuitable for the site of the medieval market-place and this was laid out on the plateau uphill to the east. Here a small burn rose and ran westward to the river. This ran through the medieval market-place as an open watercourse known as the Gutter of the Calsay, before running down Bank Street to the Whitesands and the river. The Whitesands were a broad belt of river sands along the foot of the western slope deriving their name from their relatively unconsolidated condition. At the point of the promontory at the north-west was an area of higher sandbeds. better

consolidated and called the Greensands. Efforts to reclaim this belt of river-deposited materials during the later medieval period are indicated by the name 'The Willies' (the willows) then in use for this rough common pasture. The hill slope leading down to it was termed the haugh. The precipitous nature of the bluffs to the north can be judged from the closeness of the contours at this part.

The outline of the plan has been taken from the 1858 O.S. 25" plan and the contours have been plotted from the modern O.S. 6" plan. Certain adjustments were necessary to eliminate known changes in the historic period. The riverside is now embanked and a conjectural line for the eastern limit of the un-embanked river has been shown instead, in sympathy with the contours. The artificial slope beside the river, constructed c. 1800 to carry New Bridge Street up to the level of the eastern abutment of the New Bridge has been eliminated and the contours reconstructed as a conjectural curve in this part. In 1746 Robert Edgar recorded that twelve foot of ground beside the river below the Townhead Moat had been carried away by the water 'within these sixty years' (Edgar History 22). The bank at the appropriate place has been drawn wider. The Loreburn has long since been culverted and the level of the ground raised along its marshy bed from Lochmabengait (English Street) northward. The 6" O.S. map shows two elongated depressions on the line of the Loreburn and these have been linked and extended southward to the existing 50 ft. contour to re-create the valley of the Loreburn as it ran southward to join the Mill Burn as recorded by G.W.Shirley (Shirley Dumfries 8). Although the course of the Mill Burn as recorded on the 1858 O.S. 25" plan is clearly that of an artificially constructed ~~late~~ <sup>de</sup>, the contours at the Millhole where it falls into the Nith indicate that this is the natural mouth of this burn. No attempt has been made to suggest a conjectural natural form for the Mill Burn or for the more southerly stretch of the Loreburn, in the absence of detailed ground contours and cartographic evidence.

The site of the town is conveniently outlined by the 50 ft contour, and it forms an undulating plateau generally varying between 50 ft and 60 ft above O.S. Datum, but also having a gradually sloping form being higher towards the north and east. Robert Edgar in what may be considered a literary conceit wrote in 1746 that the laying out of the town (which he attributed to the direction of Monks or Friars) was no doubt made to 'imitate Old Rome .... by building and augmenting the buildings on seven colins or rising grounds (tho' now within these forty years visable to the remembrance of some old persons, levelled and brot down), viz. The Townhead Hill, or Moat-hill on the North, the Chapelhill, or old School-Hill, the North-east Barnraws Hill, the Crosshill and houses on the West thereof, the Fish Cross hill, the Southward gate hill, the Kirkgate or Old Kirk Hill' (Edgar History 21-2). In his reference to 'colins' or 'rising grounds' Edgar is drawing a distinction between the two senses in which 'hill' is commonly used: viz. a rounded eminence, which can be appreciated from all directions, and the gradient or incline where a road goes uphill, which can be appreciated only along this linear route. The three of the former variety are Townhead Moat, already referred to; the appreciable mound to the north of the Gutter of the Calsay underlying the west side of the market place on the crown of which the mercat cross was erected; and a hillock in the lower High Street at the mouth of Loch-mabengait on which the Fish Cross was erected. As listed by Edgar the other four (Chapel hill at the north end of the Back Raw; the North-east Barnraws Hill, the northern end of Loreburn St. or Yairdheads; the Southward gate hill, the Soutergait dropping steeply to the Mill Burn and the Nith; and the Kirkgate, rising up from the Mill Burn towards the Parish Church) are all hill-slopes, and are therefore unlikely to have been 'levelled or brot down' in any appreciable way in or after c. 1706. The Moat-hill he elsewhere specifically described as then existing, and the Cross hill has been surmounted since 1708 by the surviving Mid-Steeple and the building adjacent to the north on the site of the cross,

so that neither of these hills can have been levelled. The only remaining eminence in his list is the Fish Cross hill, so presumably this was removed in or after c. 1706 from the open space where Lochmabengait debouched into the High Street. It was presumably quite small.

These surface undulations clearly had a definite effect on the detailed layout of the medieval burgh, but unfortunately the contour interval in the site plan does not reveal them, and accurate information is not yet available to enable intermediate contours to be plotted. The Cross-hill causes the marked westward bulge of the 50 ft contour just to the north of the small stream flowing westward (the Gutter of the Calsay) and it would be a natural focus for a market place on the 50 ft plateau, if such existed there before the building of the burgh. The position for the mercat cross on this hill probably influenced the disposition of the whole burgh layout around it in its original conception. The Fish Cross seems to have been placed on a convenient but smaller natural eminence when erected.

In the next part of the study successive conjectural stages in the development of Dumfries in the medieval period will be plotted on copies of this site plan.



part four:

CONCLUSIONS

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DUMFRIES

The way that relations between the Canmore kings of Scots and the lords of Galloway in the twelfth century provide a good reason why the king's burgh was founded at Dumfries, was explained in section one above, together with the salient features of the contrast between Galloway and Scotland east of the River Nith. The setting of Dumfries as a border stronghold and natural focus of routes to the main fords into and out of Galloway, lying on the left bank of the river with marshes to the north, east and south, was described in section two, which completed the part of the study concerned with the background.

The next part was devoted to the history of the origin and early development of the medieval burgh at Dumfries using written evidence about the town and on former buildings and structures within it. After a detailed discussion of the charter evidence bearing on the foundation of the burgh, the theory of George Neilson on this was found to be unsatisfactory. Certain provisional conclusions were drawn as to a more likely chronology of the events which had a bearing on the foundation of the king's burgh at Dumfries, viz.

- c. 1135      Nithsdale divided among the sons of Dunegal Lord of Nithsdale, with Radulf taking Dumfries and lower Nithsdale. Townhead demesne—centre at Dumfries the caput of his lordship.
- c. 1160      Townhead castle created at the time of Malcolm IV's campaigns into Galloway.
- c. 1166      William I having taken lower Nithsdale on

- death of Radulf, founded the king's burgh of Dumfries.
- c. 1173 Motte-and-bailey castle ('paradise') erected at Castledykes to protect burgh from attack from the south.
- c. 1184 Parish Church and the chapel in the burgh granted to Kelso Abbey to replace revenues from Roxburgh then in English hands.
- c. 1184 x Royal Castle of Dumfries with its chapel  
c.1200 built at Castledykes. ? Sheriffdom of Dumfries created.

The argument was carried beyond the written evidence in the third part of the study, where the topography of the burgh was examined. The cartographic evidence provided fairly adequate information for the ancient elements surviving in the town's layout up to the time of the 1858 Ordnance Survey plan to be distinguished and for relatively modern changes to be identified and the former arrangements to be reconstructed. The ancient street plan of the burgh's central area was defined and by a process of plan-analyses the plot-pattern was made to reveal at least two conjectural stages of development (the Long-plot and the Short-plot Periods) and grounds were suggested for the earlier period's having had at least two phases. These may be correlated with the 'foundation period' and the period of 'early development' under which the evidence for buildings and structures was discussed. The Short-plot Period approximates to the pre-Reformation part of the historical period of 'later development'.

As a preliminary step before attempting to summarise the findings of the study in the form of a series of plans reconstructing the spatial arrangements of the burgh in these successive periods, the character of the immediate site of the town was analysed and the importance of the plateau defined

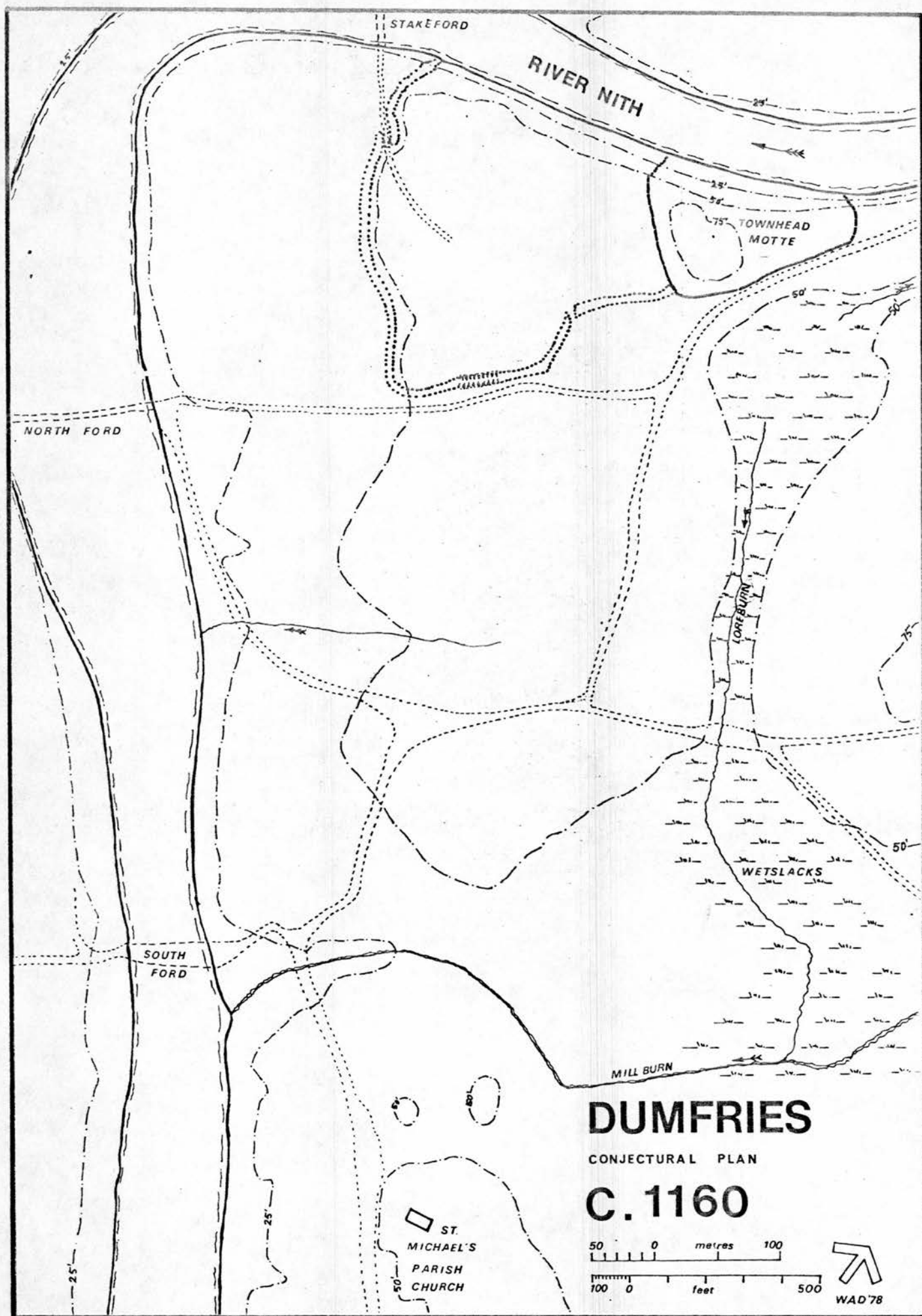


Fig. 31.



by the 50 ft contour was discovered. A conjectural plan of the Site drawn over an O.S. base was produced reconstructing the physical features as they may have been in the medieval period, before subsequent changes. This plan will now be used as the base-map on which the four stages of the occupation of the site will be plotted on conjectural plans as follows:

<u>Plot-type</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Conjectural Plan</u>
---	Pre-burghal	'c. 1160'
Long	Foundation	'c. 1170'
Long	Early development	'c. 1270'
Short	Later development	'c. 1560'

#### Dumfries in the Pre-burghal Period.

The conjectural plan of Dumfries c. 1160 shows the site as it may have been when still held by Radulf. The principal features are the parish church of St. Michael in its knoll to the south of the stream later called the Mill Burn, and the motte-and-bailey castle at Townhead. The latter is presumed to have been a remodelling of Radulf's former demesne-centre itself set within the earthworks of an ancient promontory fort which had given its name to the site. A palisade is suggested on the higher ground around the motte but a ditch is shown as the principle element of the defences of the bailey. This could possibly have been inherited from the demesne-centre and promontory fort. The line suggested for the ditch on the south side of the bailey is along the northern boundary of the built up area in the later medieval period. This later line was presumably determined by the defences already existing at the time it was laid-out. The section of ditch recorded in front of the Maxwell's Great House is included and it has been continued westward to where the land begins to slope down to the river, where it turns northward roughly parallel to the 50ft contour. The contour line is of course not a topographical feature but the western stretch of these defences would here have followed the crest of the hill. The track leading to the

Stakeford is shown leading through the defences and an entrance to the bailey is suggested on the south side as a possible reason for the re-entrant in the line of the boundary near the motte.

The other chief morphological determinant of the burgh's layout is shown in the pattern of tracks or roads on the site, leading to the fords of the Nith. In the section on the setting of Dumfries it was emphasised that there was only a minor route approaching from the north-east by Townhead, and that the main approach from Edinburgh, Lochmaben and Annan was by crossing the Loreburn from the east on the line of the later Lochmabengait (English Street). The nature of this crossing is not mentioned in the sources available. It will be shown on the reconstructed plans as a ford until the sixteenth century when embanked approaches to a bridge are suggested as a step towards the Loreburn's being lost to view in a culvert. The road from the north-east enters the site by the narrow isthmus between the marsh at the head of the Loreburn and the defences of the Townhead Motte.

The major and minor roads entering the site from the east side are reflected by coincidence in a major and minor ford, the more southerly being of greater importance. These have been named the North Ford and the South Ford on the plan, although no distinguishing names are recorded. The likely nature of the Stakeford as a more difficult but more direct 'private' route into Galloway from the Townhead castle, is indicated by its not being linked to the general road system, although it could have been linked fairly easily by a path running outside the western defences of the bailey joining the ford to 'Friars Vennel'.

Users of either of the eastern approaches may have intended to use either of the main fords but the route pattern would take account of the greater use of the southern approach and ford. Travellers from Lochmaben, and the rest of Scotland,

would come from the east passing along the south side of the hill (marked by the 75ft contour) later called Chrystal Mount. The road would be joined from the south-east by that from Lochar Moss (extended in the thirteenth century by a made trackway to Collin on the other side) and the road would then ford the Loreburn and narrow again on the other side. Here on the plateau defined by the 50ft contour the road would proceed westward until it reached a blunt spur overlooking the river where it was necessary to choose the route to one of the alternative fords. If the South Ford was to be used, the road ran steeply downhill towards the Mill Burn but then turned westward to keep to the drier land (indicated by the 25ft contour). It is instructive to see how the road approaching from the south, past the church, forded the Mill Burn and then gained the drier ground beyond, before turning west to go down to the South Ford. This southern route via Lochmabengait follows the lines of existing streets of the town but must pre-date the town's foundation. The logic of the pattern in relation to the existing features and the contours of the ground is suggested as sufficient explanation.

If the same travellers had chosen to use the North Ford, their route would have taken off from the previous blunt spur overlooking the river and presumably would have run downhill to ford the stream (later the 'Gutter of Calsay' stream) near its mouth and proceed along the sandbeds (Whitesands) to the North Ford. There are indications in the pattern of the long-plots that there may have been a road on the line indicated, but all other trace of it in the town-plan seem to have been obliterated by extensions of the burgh.

It must be presumed that the South Ford was also the most used by travellers approaching from the north-east along the left bank of the river from upper Nithsdale. They entered the site by Townhead and their route ran southward to join the Lochmabengait route and so to the South Ford. Reasons why this road did not head directly for the fork in the road already

described, will be suggested below. For those travellers from the north-east intending to use the North Ford, their route would branch off the more important route and run directly westward to that ford on the line of the later 'Friars Vennel'. There may have been defensive outworks to the suggested main gate to the castle, which would have fixed a northern limit to the position of where this route branched off the route running southward to 'Lochmabengait'. Alternatively the road may have been kept at a bowshot from the main gate as a defensive precaution, and this trapezoid area may have been reserved by the crown for the same reason when the burgh was first founded c. 1166. There are indications in the plot pattern of a lost road in this position among the plots on the east side of the market place. The remainder of both routes follow the surviving street pattern.

One of the matters which failed to be determined from the examination of the historical evidence was whether there was a civil settlement at Dumfries in the time of Radulf, although it was established that most likely there was no recognised 'burgh' as such. The analysis of the plot-pattern showed a marked regularity of layout and an essential simplicity of conception which were interpreted as the results of deliberate town planning at one time in the later twelfth century under officers of the crown. There are no relict features or unexplained anomalies in the town plan which would indicate the presence of a pre-burghal settlement on part of the same site. It must be concluded therefore that any civil settlement in Radulf's time was within the enclosure of the demesne-centre and presumably remained there when this became the bailey of the castle. The demesne-tenants of such a settlement would suddenly find themselves as tenants-in-chief of the crown when William took over Dumfries, and it seems likely that they would have been moved out of the bailey of the then royal castle at Townhead, to become the first burgesses of the king's burgh to the south.



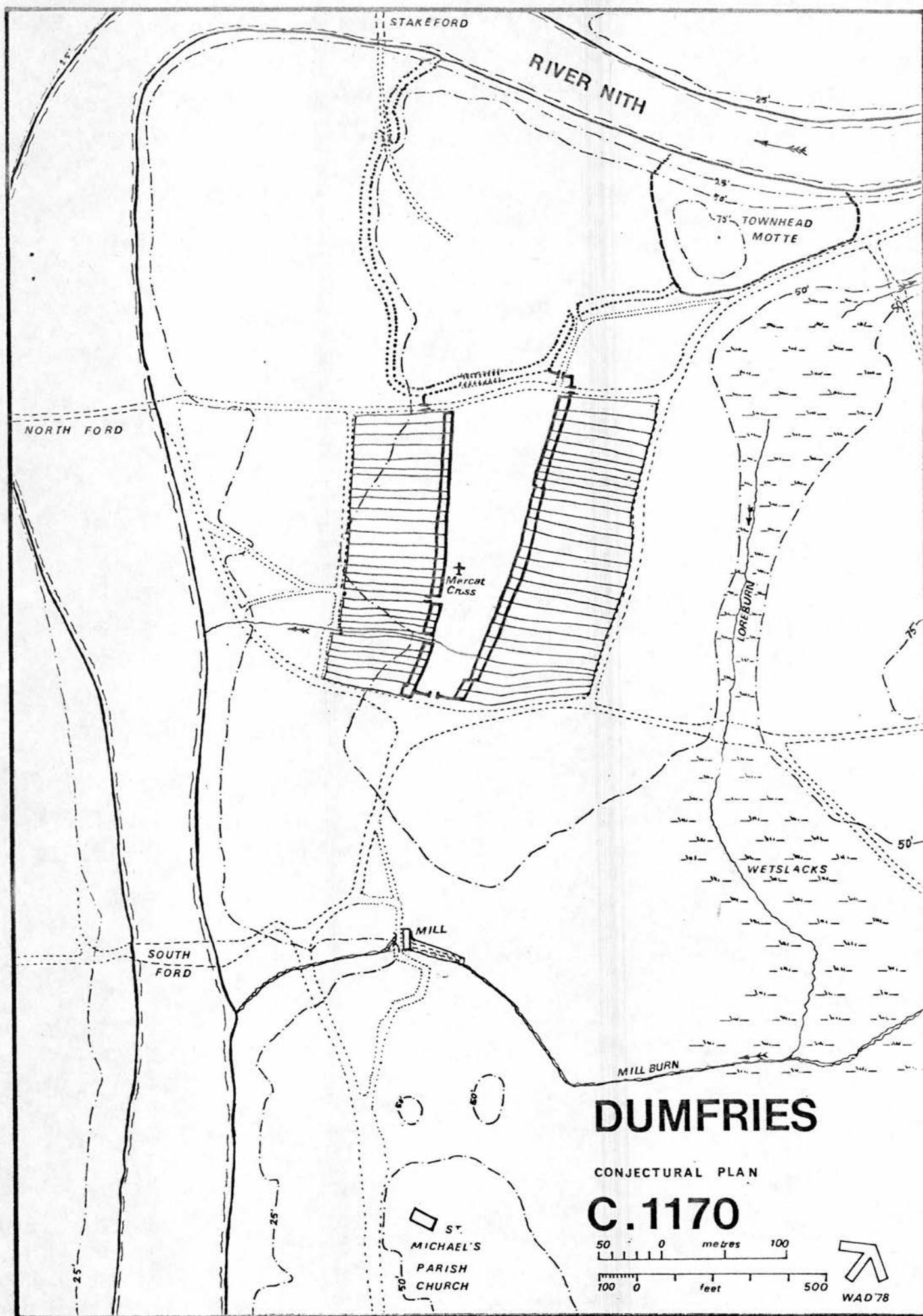


Fig. 32

G.W.Shirley suggested that the site of the town may originally have been that of a border market of ancient origin (Shirley Dumfries 16). This hypothesis would explain the pre-burghal use of the area between the cross-routes to north and south. The eastern road (Loreburn Street) may have been routed to avoid the spring at the source of the 'Gutter of Calsay' stream, but it may also have been pushed eastward by a recognised market area overlooked by the hillock on which the mercat cross of the burgh was to be erected, and which may have been similarly marked for the purposes of the older market.

At the time of Radulf it is presumed that there was no castle of any sort on the Castledykes site. The ford there would be adequately controlled by the feudal lord of Troqueer in his motte on the western side, presumably planted there by the influence of Malcolm IV or David I for this purpose, just as the motte at Lincluden was sited in a strategic position on the right bank of the Nith an equal distance north of Dumfries at a place where the river was fordable. In Radulf's time the threat from the south, from England, had not developed.

The castle at Townhead was adjacent to the less important of the roads from the north and east, and the Chrystal Mount could have provided a site for a castle to control the more important 'Lochmabengait' road, but geographical inertia, domestic convenience, and legal tradition may all have played their part in the decision to transform the old demesne-centre into a motte-and-bailey castle, rather than possibly to build a castle at Chrystal mount. The Townhead site had certain advantages from the military point of view, and in Radulf's time it would most likely have needed only to defend itself and those dwelling in its bailey.

#### The Foundation Period

The conjectural plan of Dumfries c. 1170 is intended to show

the immediate effects of William I's taking over the strategic strong-point at Dumfries c. 1166 and of his founding a kings' burgh there.

A water mill is shown on a dam across the Mill Burn with tracks linking it to the previous road system. This would certainly be necessary once the burgh's greater population existed in the vicinity but a mill may well have existed in Radulf's time although there are no records extant to prove this. A mill, along with a church, was one of the essential requisites of a 'landed estate' of the medieval period, and all tenants were thirled to the mill and owed their t<sup>h</sup>ends to the parish church. The possibility that this was also the mill for the area of the parish of Dumfries is suggested by the comparatively greater width of the track (Millgait) approaching the mill from the south, the landward area, compared with that approaching from the town. The barns of the burgesses at this stage would have been at the tails of their burgage plots rather than isolated near the arable fields, so that convenience to barns lying south of the parish church is unlikely to have been a factor influencing the apparent difference in importance of the two approaches to the Mill.

The layout of the burgh seems to have been quite simple, with a broad market place flanked by blocks of burgage plots to east and west. Why the market place is wider at the end furthest from the main entrance, from the south, is not clear, but the same pattern can be found elsewhere (e.g. at Haddington) and it seems to have been a standard requirement and incorporated as such in the design of the town-plan.

The new burgh's market place was positioned to incorporate the hillock on which the mercat cross was then erected as the visible symbol of burgh status and the legal centre-point of its mercantile activities. The space available for the burgh was limited by the existing roads on the north, east and south, and these may have been regarded as fixed bound-

aries. On the west the land falls away steeply to the river below the plateau generally defined by the 50ft contour, so that the houses on the west side of the market place encroach on the foot of the west side of the cross-hill. This seems to have been done so that further north and south the built-frontage would be on the plateau above the 50ft contour, although the tails of the plots behind extend down the slope to a new back lane later significantly called 'Under-the-Yairds' (Irish Street).

The methodical procedure necessary for setting out on the ground the pattern of the new burgh, and presumably followed by the lynors (surveyors), was discussed when the plot pattern was analysed. This must have been based on a survey of the site, the selection of an appropriate plan-form, and the considerable calculation necessary to adapt the formal concept to the features and contours of the actual site. The form of the burgh's layout as shown on the plan is substantially the result of a twelfth century town-planner's carefully adapting a pre-conceived plan form (albeit no doubt chosen for its suitability) to the physical and man-made features of the existing site. The result is town-planning, and the supreme importance of the pattern of the medieval town-plan at Dumfries is that it is an artifact designed and executed in this early period which has survived in recognisable form to the present day. Far from being an abstraction based on property boundaries it is in fact the one great lasting element which has generated the arranged form of the buildings and spaces which have constituted the town of Dumfries, over a period of eight centuries.

To return to the details of the layout, an inconsistency in shape among the regular series of burgage plots indicates a possible former vennel on the west side of the market place three plots south of the mercat cross, which would have been a convenient entry from the west for those using the fords or for merchant ships beached on Whitesands. A forked path



is suggested running westward from the issue of this vennel as the likely cause of the canted north boundary of the ground surrounding the later Chapel of the Willeis to be built on the north west corner of the junction of what are now Irish Street and Bank Street.

The stream running westward through the market place became the 'Gutter of Calsay' and was no doubt, as its name implies, the chief means of draining the surface water from the lower market place once it was surfaced as a market stance. It is suggested that there was no vennel on the line of this stream at this stage, since it was only six plots north of the south port and it would have been four plots south of the vennel suggested already.

For the purpose of taking tolls from all those bringing goods, beasts and produce to the licensed market of the burgh, rather than from military necessity, all entrances to the burgh were controlled by ports. Conjectural positions for those at this initial stage of the burgh's development are indicated. The 'Lochmabengait' route being the most important the main port would presumably face onto the wider space at the fork in this road. The burgh would have had its pre-determined perimeter formed as each burgess built up his back dyke (rear boundary) with a high fence or wall and the external side boundaries of the end-plots were enclosed in the same way. The comparatively wide southern mouth of the market place will have been closed by a formal wall or pallisade in which the port would be set. There is a similar arrangement surviving at the end of South Street, St. Andrews.

At the northern end of the burgh the position of the port on the western side is suggested at the narrowest part of the space between the northern boundary of the northern most burgage plot on that side, and the defences enclosing the castle bailey. A similar case is suggested on the east side of the burgh at the north, but here the gap was probably wider

and there may have already been a road leading to the castle gate on the line of a later street. To allow for these complications a bent wall is shown between the last burgage plot and the salient angle of the bailey defences, with a port on the main road, and a subsidiary port on the other road so that the principal port could not be by-passed. The conjectured vennel four plots south of the mercat cross would also need to have been controlled and a port is suggested at its head, before its entry into the market place. An alternative position could have been in line with the back dykes on this western side.

The plan was drawn to show the burgh in its initial simplicity, a few years after it was founded c. 1166. It was probably built up within a year or so of its inception --- the erection of a house and its dykes on the predetermined plot boundaries were conditions of taking up a burgage and joining in the commercial life of a king's burgh. The castle at Townhead was, in c. 1170, still probably the only castle in the vicinity. It would be then a royal castle. The artificially constructed route from Cockpool near Ruthwell, across the seaward end of the Lochar Moss, to Bankend at the southern extremity of the Craigs Ridge, may have come into use about the time when Dumfries was made a burgh, and this provided a new route from Annan, the Solway and England, approaching Dumfries from the south. Soon after the period of the plan this new southern approach and the likely dangers to the burgh from ships coming up the Nith, seem to have been the reasons why in c. 1173, when William I was preparing for war with the English king, a new motte-and-bailey castle seems to have been erected beside the lowest ford at Castle-dykes south of the town, using the high riverside mound called 'paradise' as its motte-hill.

#### The Early Development of Dumfries.

Dumfries enjoyed its greatest prosperity during the thirteenth

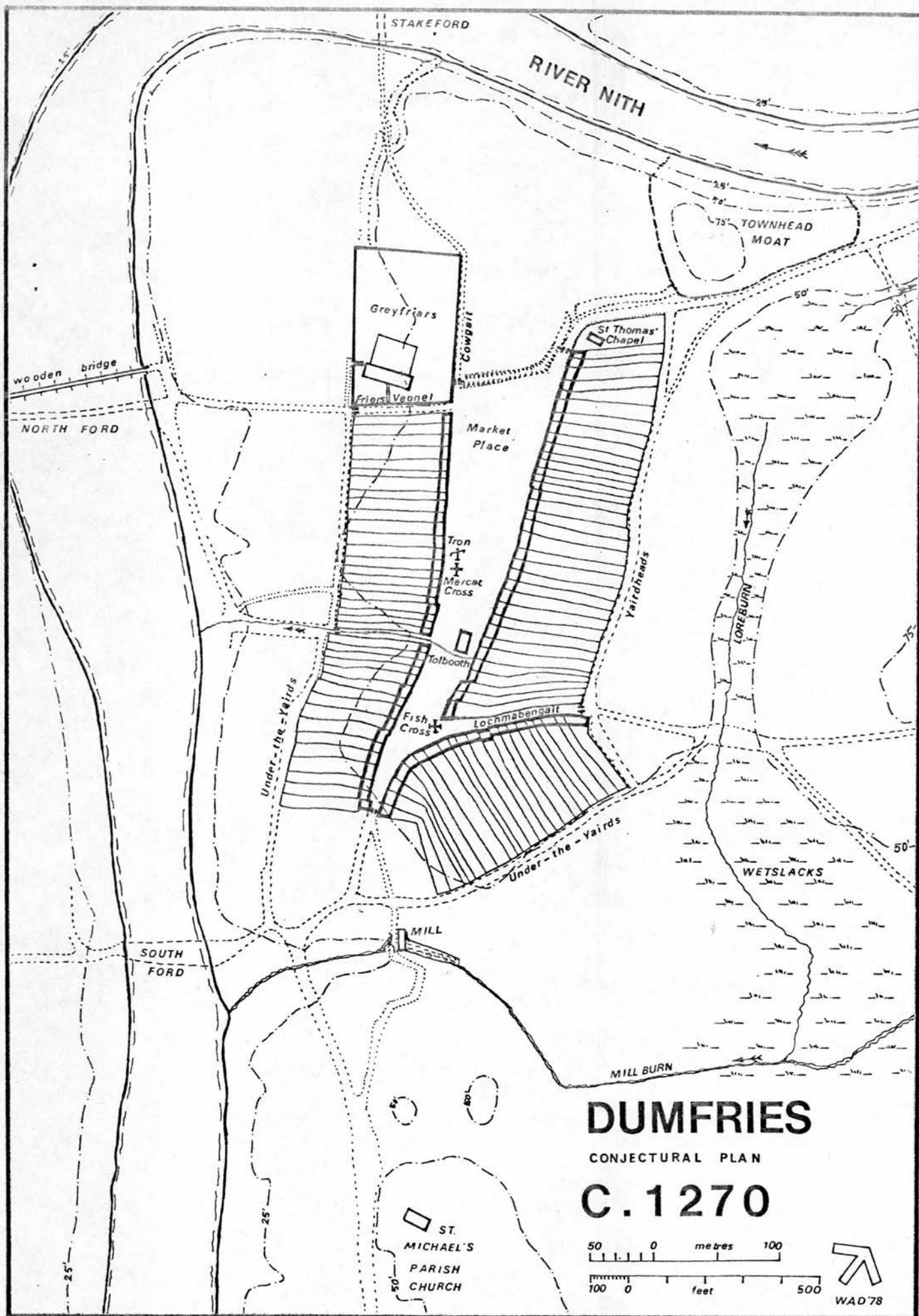


Fig. 33.

century, and the conjectural plan of the burgh in c. 1270 attempts to reconstruct its layout at that time. It records its progress in a planned extension southward, the siting of two religious foundations in the northern part of the site, the addition of three new features to the (extended) market place, and of a bridge across the Nith.

The key to an understanding of the changes at the northern end of the town seems to be the building of the new castle at Castledykes by the crown in c. 1173 previously referred to. The situation of the old Townhead castle, then cheek by jowl with the king's burgh, must have appeared very unsatisfactory to any castellan of the time, and its accomodation and arrangements may have been rather antiquated and difficult to improve on that site. The building of the (first) new castle at Castledykes seems likely to have been associated with a virtual evacuation of the Townhead castle by the military, in favour of the purpose built accomodation on the new site (later to be redeveloped for the larger Royal Castle of Dumfries after c. 1184). The crown still held the site at Townhead and it was not thrown into the area of the burgh, but its use was apparently no longer subject to the same military restrictions. In fact it is very likely that the motte and its defences were deliberately slighted before most of the then remaining ground was granted to the Maxwells c. 1300 and the moat hill became the caput of their '£5 land of Moat'.

Long before that grant and within a few years of the military importance of the Townhead castle having been reduced, the king's pious wish to found a chapel in the burgh (it seems to have been a chapel-of-ease to the parish church) dedicated to St. Thomas, seems to have been the most likely occasion of the extension of the eastern block of burgages northward over the trpezoid area before the castle gate. It seems likely that the chapel was built there and was dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury (i.e. Becket) who was canonised in 1173



and to whom William I dedicated the great abbey at Arbroath built in 1178 in which he chose to be buried. The chapel at Dumfries, in his new burgh, presumably dates from the same period. It was endowed with a toft, which may have been one of the five plots created by this extension in addition to the chapel's ground. (It has been suggested that the chapel stood in the market place but this seems very unlikely at this early period when all the market area appears to have been needed and encroachments were forbidden.) The chapel of St. Thomas in the burgh together with the parish church and all their incomes and endowments were granted to Kelso Abbey by William I c. 1184.

With the development of the area in front of the former castle gate the road from the north-east appears to have been re-routed along the tracks following the defences, to sweep southward into the market place. The line of the former road seems to be represented by the discontinuity in the plot pattern near the northern end of the eastern block of burgage plots. The port would need to be repositioned and this is suggested at the end of the built-up frontage, linking to the defences if the castle, and with the chapel in a traditional position next to the port (c.f. the positions of the later Chapel of the Willeis and the Chrystal Chapel).

St. Thomas' Chapel was presumably the only religious foundation in the northern part of the town for a period of about eighty years, until the Greyfriars were established. One does not know how seriously the Abbey of Kelso took its obligations to provide vicars and pastoral care for the people of Dumfries having appropriated the incomes and property of the parish church and the chapel. It seems likely that the chapel was considered of less priority and it may have already been in decay by the time that the alternative attractions of the new preaching church of the Greyfriars became available when they settled in Dumfries c. 1260. The chapel of St. Thomas is not recorded again and its position is not known for certain.

Presumably its functions were supplied by the Greyfriars church, and the chapel ground would have been redeveloped or sold for the benefit of the Abbey revenues by the end of the thirteenth century.

The period from the conjectured evacuation of the Townhead castle, to the settlement of the Greyfriars in Dumfries c. 1260, was also a space of some eighty years. In that time the defensive ditch round the bailey will have silted up and the stretch forming part of the burgh perimeter may have had to be specially maintained, while the rest probably decayed. Whoever invited the Greyfriars to settle at Dumfries is not clear, but the ground they were provided with appears to have come from the crown, and the kings of Scots subsequently gave alms regularly to them, as is recorded in the rolls of the Exchequer. The first record of their presence in Dumfries is such a grant in 1266 (E.R. i, 27: Cowan and Eason Med. Relig. Houses Scot. 125). It may well be that the house was founded by the crown.

The factors likely to have been involved in the setting out of the 'Papal Walls' of the new convent have been discussed in the section dealing with the evidence from the town's layout. The rectangular area of about two acres seems to have been laid out from the north side of 'Friars Vennel' as a northward continuation of the block of properties on the west side of the market place. It was suggested above that the northern boundary of the convent may have been fixed merely so as to give the area required, or alternatively that it was determined by some existing topographic feature which has not survived. In view of the fact that the gift of this area to the convent may well have involved the obliteration of a stretch of the, by then no doubt decayed, earthworks of the former castle bailey, it seems that the former explanation is more likely. Inside the enclosing walls of the convent, the ground was made level by artificially building up the lower slope for several feet --- hence the need for steps at its

western gate. Any ditches of the old defences would have been filled in and buried in the course of these works.

If the interpretation of the origin of the layout of the Greyfriars convent at Dumfries suggested here is correct, then the Townhead castle must have lost all military significance by the mid-thirteenth century so that it was a matter of no moment that a grant of part of the crown land there, for the convenient siting of the Greyfriars in relation to the burgh, involved the obliteration of a large section of the old defences. By the same token the path to the Stakeford, which may earlier have been private to the former demesne-centre and castle, was able to be led into the market place along the east wall of the Greyfriars enclosure to serve as a new public way, both to that ford and to the town's commonland of the Willeis -- hence the name Cowgait which seems to have been applied to it. A port will have been necessary on this route and the most likely position would be on the line of the ditch at the head of the market place. The position of the new port at the foot of Friars Vennel, between the corner of the Convent wall and the corner of the plot opposite, in line with the back dykes, remained the same thereafter during and beyond the medieval period.

The first Bridge of Dumfries, no doubt a wooden structure, was presumably built in the period of the Burgh's great prosperity during the thirteenth century. It was probably in the vicinity of the existing medieval stone bridge, just upstream of the North Ford, and the road from the Friars Vennel port turned north at the ford to approach the end of the bridge. The construction of early medieval bridges effectively prevented the further passage of shipping, so that the position of the bridge may have been chosen as much to maintain the trade from ships coming up to the Whitesands, as to serve a lesser or more important route approaching from the Galloway side. Once built the bridge itself decided the

importance of the roads running to it.

Just as the burgh was apparently created by William I and his Chamberlain Philip de Valognes (responsible for the king's burghs) c. 1166, it seems to have been extended in a consistent manner about the beginning of the thirteenth century, probably by the same king and the same Chamberlain before 1214, in the same period that the king's burgh of Ayr was being founded and its town-plan created.

The planned extension of the built up area of Dumfries involved taking into the burgh the length of Lochmabengait running outside it to the south, and setting out a new series of long burgage plots extending southward beyond that street. The form of the plots was angled on the west to come opposite the southern end of a new series of plots extending the blocks on the west side of the market place southward. The new Southward port seems to have been designed to be in a re-entrant angle protected by the last house on the eastern side which had been built further south than the corresponding house on the western side. This carefully designed defensive feature is also traceable at Ayr (Dodd Ayr 305). The feature was also used at Dumfries at the eastern end of the new plot-series south of Lochmabengait, where the Lochmabengait port was in line with the back dykes of the plots on the eastern side of the market place to the north.

The extension southward of the series of burgage plots on the west side of the market place involved the obliteration of the road branching off Lochmabengait towards the North Ford. A discontinuity in the plot pattern probably marks its former position. Its loss was apparently made good by forming a new wide vennel along the line of the 'Gutter of Calsay' stream (Bank Street) to lead down to the Whitesands and the North Ford. The conjectured older vennel, four plots further north than this, seems then to have been redundant and to have been built over. Its position is indicated by a discontinuity in



in the plot pattern. The new vennel presumably had a port in a re-entrant angle at its foot, due to the back dykes not being in line on either side. The southern branch of the path which formerly ran westward from the end of the older vennel, seems to have survived long enough to influence the alignment of the boundary for the wall round the chapel of the Willeis built late on the north west corner of the junction of Bank Street with the back lane (Irish Street).

The effect on the pattern of roads which had existed in Radulf's time, of the building of the first stage of the burgh, had been to break the line of communication where the more northerly of the two former roads across the site had been taken within the burgh. The ports were closed at night and opened for trading to begin in the morning, so that some travellers not wishing or unable to enter the burgh would have had to follow the back lanes to continue their journey on the other side of the town. When this second stage of the town's development took the previous main route within the burgh as Lochmabengait and obliterated the branch road to the North Ford alternative arrangements must have been made to enable droves of cattle and passing travellers to by-pass the burgh as and when necessary. A more direct route from the ford of the Loreburn, running west along the hill contour to serve also as a back lane to the new plots south of Lochmabengait, was constructed to rejoin the Lochmabengait road where it re-emerged from the burgh and turned west towards the South Ford. So that travellers from the north-east could join this new route (Shakespeare St.) the back lane to the plots east of the market place (Loreburn St.) seems to have been extended past the flank of the easternmost of the new plots in Lochmabengait to join the new route. Likewise the back lane behind the new plots on the west of the market place (Irish St.) was extended behind the new plots on that side and then ran southward to the Mill Burn.

The enlarged market place of the burgh was probably first

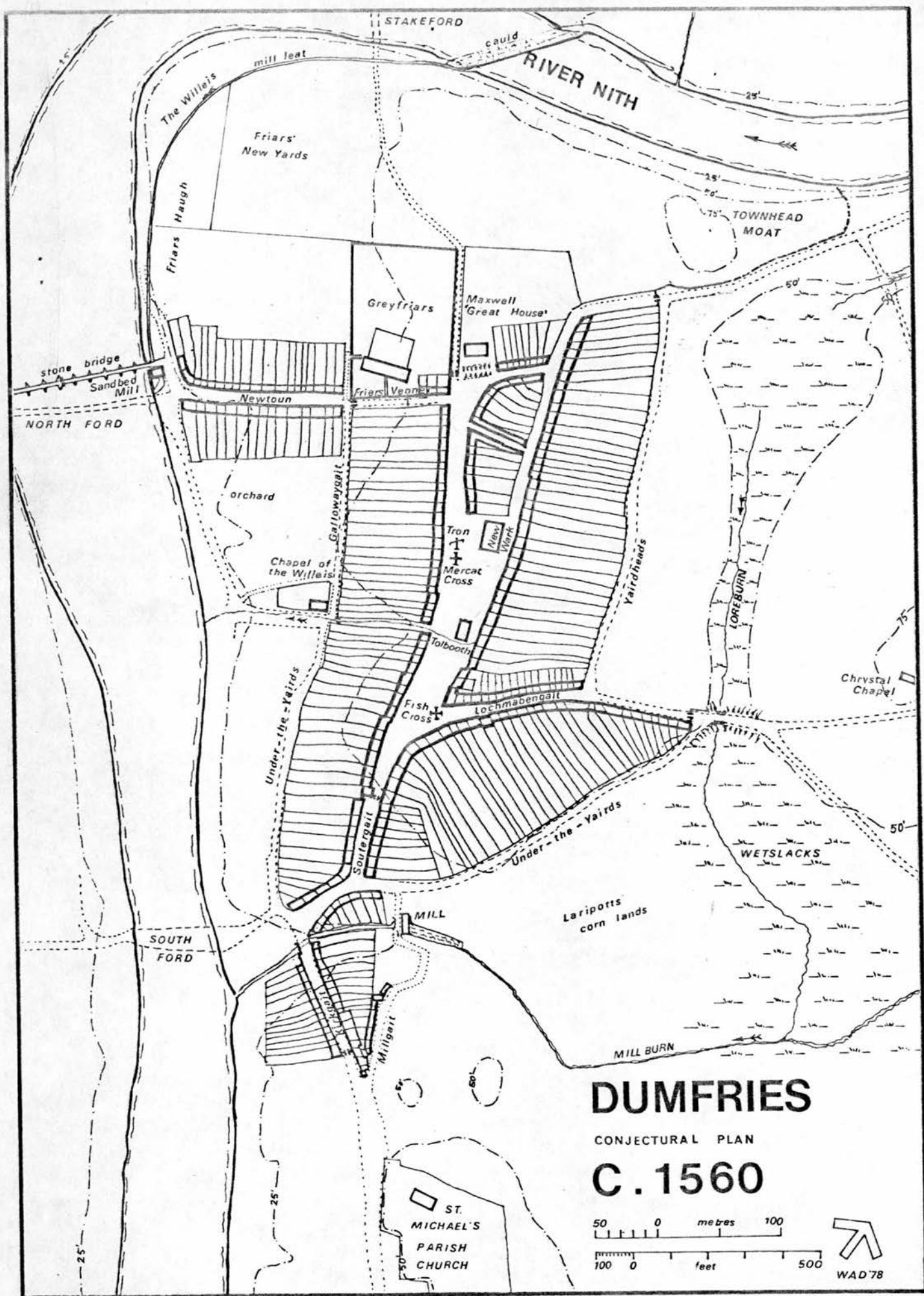


Fig. 34.

adorned in this period with a tolbooth, which was a composite jail, council house and civic store room, erected on the east side of the market place on the axis of the new vennel leading to the water of Nith. The new market area at the southern end became the location of the Fish Cross and its associated market which seems to have been at the mouth of Lochmabengait. A tron or public weigh-beam was made necessary by law and that at Dumfries seems to have been a little to the north of the mercat cross on the west side of the market place.

At this stage the burgh had reached the apogee of its medieval development. The spatial relationship of the principal features and the clarity with which the town must have been perceived as a man-made element in the unenclosed landscape of the time, would have left no doubt in the mind of the observer that this was a medieval planned town, devised and planted there by the power of William the Lion king of Scots, as an important step in securing the unity of his kingdom.

The extent of the thirteenth century burgh appears to have been adequate for the needs of succeeding generations until building developments, by this time employing short-plot forms, began again in the later fifteenth century and continued in the sixteenth century. The effect of many of these developments was to begin the process of disguising the simple outline of the early burgh by peripheral accretions, which process had continued to the present day.

#### The Later Medieval Development of Dumfries.

The conjectural plan of Dumfries in c. 1560 shows the end result of developments in the medieval period. Most of the additions since the time of the previous plan (c. 1270) had taken place since c. 1450 when the economy of the burgh showed some revival after a long period of commercial stagnation. Rather earlier than this the defensive needs of the

burgh had caused a large encroachment on the market place in the form of the New Wark.

The masonry castle at Castledykes had been further strengthened by the English in the 1290's and changed hands more than once in the ensuing warfare. Bruce's strategy of sligh- 2 ting castles to prevent their effective use by the English was probably applied to Dumfries Castle in 1313, but the damage may not have been irreparable since one of the terms of the release of David II in 1357 seems to have been the destruction of a group of castles in the south-west including that of Dumfries. Three quarters of a century later the castle was reported as in ruins (R.C.A.H.M. Dumfriesshire 51). The protection of the burgh of Dumfries had been one of the principal purposes of the royal castle at Castledykes, and the destruction of that castle must have led to alternative arrangements being made.

The burgh itself had never been defensible in a military sense so that logically in the event of an attack there would be no extra loss if the defensive strength were sited inside the built up area rather than remote from it. (The burgesses no doubt would then fight more briskly to protect the burgh which would be in place of a bailey or barmkin!). The demands of security and economy seem to have been met by the erection of a large rectangular stone tower-house in the market place on the eastern side a little further north than the cross. Known as the New Wark, its name points to a public rather than a private responsibility for its maintenance and defence. 21

By the fifteenth century the Lords Maxwell were probably resident at Dumfries and in 1545 the 5th Lord's new house is mentioned (Barbour Maxwell House 187). This 'Great House' stood at the head of the market place in front of the present Greyfriars church, and it had barns and yards to the east. Rebuilt by 1580 after damage from an English raid, the area to the north became the castle gardens together with the area



to the west formerly the house and yards of the Greyfriars convent. The plan shows the period when the Convent and Maxwell Great House co-existed.

The early existence of the Maxwell's residence in the town seems to have provided sufficient security for the New Wark to be allowed to be feued out as a normal town property, so that as early as 1443 the M'Briars, a leading family of burgesses, had ~~seisin~~ <sup>seisin</sup> of it, and it became part of the endowment of the altar of St. Nicholas in the Parish Church. It was largely demolished in 1764 to create Queensberry Square.

A Stone bridge appears to have been built to replace the earlier wooden one. A Papal Relaxation of 1431/2 was in favour of the bridge recently begun by the burgesses and inhabitants of those parts (and for enlarging the chapel of Our Lady nearby, i.e. the Chapel of the Willeis on Irish St. at the corner with Bank Street) (Bliss Cal. Papal Reg. viii, 347). The crown took responsibility for directing the works from 1455 to 1465 when they were presumably completed. The Sandbed Mill was erected in 1522 against the east end of the bridge, served by a 'water-gang' or mill leat from a cauld across the Nith upriver from the Stakeford.

Up to the end of the thirteenth century the place of execution was on the hill to the east outside the burgh later called Chrystal Mount. About 1306 Sir Christopher de Seton, brother in law of Robert the Bruce, was drawn, hanged and beheaded by the English on the hill and a memorial chantry chapel was founded there by his widow soon after, dedicated to the Holy Rood. It was further endowed by King Robert in 1323, and, the place of execution having been transferred elsewhere, the hill became known as that of Christopher's Chapel or Chrystal Mount. It will be noted that of the various chapels and the parish and Greyfriars churches only the last was entered from the streets of the burgh. All the others were outside

the ports on the main routes, but outside the burgh. In this way they were accessible to travellers and people of the rural parish as well as to the burgesses. One relic of the Castle of Dumfries seems to have been the chapel of St. Mary at Castledykes which was still there in 1532.

The investment in improving communications indicated by the rebuilding in stone of the Bridge of Dumfries, presumably also led to the bridging of the Loreburn and the Mill Burn, where there appear to have been only fords up to the sixteenth century. The embanking of the roads leading up to these bridges would raise them above the wetter land around and fronting onto this, development was made possible in Kirkgait and on the slopes of the Mill Hole, but the area must have remained subject to flooding. The 25ft contour generally marks the level below which development was probably hazardous unless special precautions were taken.

Such precautions were presumably taken to raise the level of the ground at the riverside on the south side of the road to the North Ford so that the formally planned development of Newtown could be built c. 1500. The plots of these properties are short, although they were probably not constricted in depth, and they do not have a back lane, where one could easily have been provided. The difference in society and the whole way of life of the sixteenth century as contrasted with that of the thirteenth century is reflected in the use of short plots as a preferred unit of burgh property rather than the early medieval long-plot.

The north side of the street at the Newtown was open land belonging to the Friars, and they only feued it for development when they were disposing of most of their landholding to increase their money revenues in the later sixteenth century. The irregularity of the plots in width suggest that plots were feued separately or in groups. The uniform depth of frontage land to be feued was probably a prior decision by

the Friars. For the same motives the Friars seem to have allowed the building of three tenements on the south-east corner of their convent enclosure before 1519. These were in a desirable commercial position at the head of Friars Vennel at its corner with the High Street. At the time they were probably the only development fronting onto the much used Friars Vennel. In the later part of that century the Friars feued the rest of the frontage, on either side of the walled passage to their church, but the difference in level must have made commercial use of this frontage difficult without extensive excavations and rebuilding works.

A similar speculation by the Lords Maxwell was presumably the origin of the eight plots on the corner of ground east of their 'Great House'. These share, with other developments of this period, the short-plot layout for which a back lane was not considered necessary. The early medieval long-plots had provided garden ground and accomodation for cattle and horses as well as the buildings and tackle of a trade. The limited accomodation available in a short-plot may have been for only the last use. The back lane would probably no longer have been required if cows were no longer kept, and structural changes in the agricultural economy of the countryside may have made the keeping of cattle by individual burgess households no longer essential. Dairy produce could no doubt be bought in the market as required.

The nature of the market itself must have changed as the agricultural regime changed, and by the later fifteenth century it must have been clear that a considerable area of the market place was not required for marketing. The burgh authorities were ever keen to put to good account any change in circumstances (they in fact mortgaged the tolbooth at one period) and an extensive area of the northern end of the ancient market place appears to have been covered by permanent buildings as a form of 'market colonization'. In the circumstances it would have had to receive crown permission, and

there must have been a deliberate layout of new plots and buildings. There is a definite plot structure discernable, but the density of development in this island block during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has led to the impression that it was always a mass of buildings built on the market place replacing earlier and less permanent structures. The accidental process which would have to have been involved, would not have been permitted at the period at which this development took place. The frontages on the western side of this island block appear to be the plot-heads. The passage through the centre of the block appears to have had its frontage built up at an early date, and the northern side of Lochmabengait had been redeveloped with short plots by c. 1510.

The demand for burgage plots in the burgh was partially satisfied by the developments noted above but peripheral extensions to the east and west of the old long-plot burgages in Lochmabengait provided further space. A corresponding extension southward of the plots on the west side of the market place seemingly produced an extra-mural quarter for the shoemakers in Soutergait, outside the Southward port. The plots on the west side of this have a different character from those on the east side, and may be of a considerably later date.

The extension of Lochmabengait eastward involved the moving of the port there to a new position further east at the west corner of the back lane (Shakespeare St.). The plan shows a conjectural arrangement with the port linked to the Loreburn marsh on the north side of the road. By this period a system of double ports seems to have evolved on some approaches. The port on the Bridge and that at Friars Vennel were both repaired for a visit by the Queen in the sixteenth century. The outer port in Kirkgait (the Nether Port) was presumably in the nature of a toll bar and relied on the Southward port to secure the town at night, since there was no sort of continuous enclosure along the riverside or crossing the Mill Burn.



Similarly the Bridge Port could be by-passed without difficulty by using a ford. There are traditions that there was a port next to the Chrystal Mount and another at Townhead, and these may have been outer-ports of this kind. The ports used to secure the town at night and control entry to the market place were part of a smaller circuit which could not be easily evaded. A wall and port across the narrow isthmus between the Loreburn marsh and the Townhead Moat would have effectively controlled that entry and prevented the by-passing of the Lochmabengait port by travelling north along Lover's Walk from beside the Chrystal Mount to the Towbhead Road and then following the back lane on the east of the burgh down to Lochmabengait within the port. Presumably some such system of control was in force at the time.

Soon after the date taken for the conjectural plan of the burgh c. 1560 the religious properties were surrendered to the crown and granted to the Town Council. Lord Maxwell received most of the land to the north and west of his house and his next house became known as 'The Castle'. Its extensive garden survived to appear in William Roy's plan in the mid-eighteenth century, lying behind the New Church which had been built in 1727 at the rear of 'The Castle', which was itself then removed. The development of this northern area complementing the building of the New Bridge has been discussed above when the surviving cartographic evidence was examined. With peripheral developments on all sides the area of the medieval town-plan at Dumfries was subsequently encased in successive extensions, and survived fairly complete up to the recording of it in the mid-nineteenth century. Since then the fabric of the town has been subject to gross changes and extensive demolitions, especially in recent years, which have begun to successively obscure the pattern which had subsisted for eight centuries. If the value of that pattern is not recognised as the very essence of the character of all that Dumfries has been and might become, then modern pressures will surely destroy it unremarked, and a new development to a new pattern will

arise on the same hillside beside the River Nith. But this will have no connection at all, historical or traditional, with the man-made place which men have known as Dumfries continuously since the twelfth century.

Development is concerned with buildings and roads and their essential uses, but the town plan is the unchanging matrix within which development takes place in an orderly fashion so that the character of the whole survives. The pressures for development have always tried to break the pattern for private advantage but they have been resisted by the crown and then by the Town Council for many centuries past. A similar stand is needed today if the pattern is to continue and if Dumfries is to continue to be Queen of the South.

## THE FUTURE OF THE EARLY TOWN-PLAN AT DUMFRIES

The problem of the future of historic towns was posed for our generation in the terms of traffic in towns by the Buchanan Report of 1963, which stated that, 'There is a great deal at stake: it is not a question of retaining a few old buildings, but of conserving, in the face of the onslaught of motor traffic, a major part of the heritage of the English-speaking world, of which this country is the guardian' (Buchanan Traffic in Towns 197). The Council for British Archaeology, taking a wider view than its name might imply, made observations in 1964 welcoming the report and intended 'to define briefly the problems of historic towns, as seen by those particularly concerned with Britain's past' (C.B.A Buchanan Report 1). It pointed out that the heritage of which the report spoke had two aspects: buildings and patterns of streets, and of the second it wrote:

### 'Historic Street Plans

The scale and extent of road works necessary in the next 20 years presents a grave threat not only to still more individual buildings and groups, but also to the historic street plans of towns of all sizes. The Council is anxious that new roads and traffic schemes should be designed with a full appreciation of the historic value of existing patterns of streets. The diversionary plans conceived 20 years or more ago .... did unnecessary violence to ancient patterns of streets, without providing, as is now realised, any long-term solution to traffic problems. The relation of man and motor can often best be solved by preserving the plan and width of medieval streets (Traffic in Towns, para 404) whatever the age of the buildings lining them,' (ibid.)

The C.B.A. felt that special guidance should be given to those local authorities responsible for historic towns by the Scottish Development Department's arranging for the designation of historic centres which in terms of historic buildings and street plans ought not to be violated in any new schemes. It suggested that areas in historic towns which, because of the buildings and/or their street pattern ought to be preserved, should be listed and graded in the same manner as individual buildings are listed by the Secretary of State. It promised a handlist of historic towns requiring special care and attention (ibid. 2).

In the following year the C.B.A. published its 'List of Historic Towns' and emphasised that it took into account not only the existence of buildings of historic and architectural importance, but also of historic street plans. 'The street plan is the framework or skeleton of a town. The flesh may have been renewed, and a medieval street may contain only Georgian or even later buildings. Nevertheless, its medieval quality -- its width and the scale of its buildings -- persists and forms an essential ingredient in the quality of the town' (C.B.A. Historic Towns 1).

The C.B.A. said that the inclusion of any town on its list was an argument for preparing for it a comprehensive survey of the historic environment, illustrating its layout, its historic buildings, its urban quality and any other special characteristics. This plan it termed a "heritage plan" but felt it might be unrealistic to expect to preserve every historic feature of every town on the list. They did ask 'that the unique quality of any listed town should be understood, that this quality should be fostered wherever possible and that where change was inevitable, the historic structure should be handed sensitively to avoid unnecessary damage to our heritage' (ibid. 2) It felt that the next step for the listed towns was that each should have prepared for it maps defining the area to be preserved.



Dumfries figured in the list issued by the C.B.A. and the criteria for its inclusion were:

- i) Its ancient town-plan well preserved (e.g. street plan, market place).
- ii) Its ancient bridge-crossing and approaches
- iii) Its historic water-front.
- iv) That it was a town characterised by a number of Georgian and Regency buildings worthy of preservation.

It is clear that Dumfries is a good example of the type of town which has later buildings lining the streets of a medieval town, and where the contribution of the town-plan itself may be undervalued.

In a subsequent memorandum in 1966 the C.B.A. discussed the implications of the list for the planning process. It suggested that 'where new planning policies are being prepared for historic towns, the historical survey should be recognised as of basic importance rather than incidental to its main theme. In appropriate cases the C.B.A. would like to see a series of sketch maps illustrating the origin and growth of the town and any changes in its structure. The identification of the historic street plan will be based upon an appraisal of its physical form reinforced by the use of all available information from maps and documentary sources to determine the age and character of any changes in it. Market places, squares and ancient streets --- apart from their social and period interest --- have nearly always retained a special visual quality of their own and clearly an appraisal of the historic and visual qualities of the street plan is closely related to the appreciation of the buildings' (C.B.A. Planning Process 2). Looking to the future this memorandum made clear why it was important for the town's pattern to be preserved.

'Every ancient city has a street pattern or form designed to serve the needs of the age in which it developed. It had a plan. The recording and analysis of these street plans is not merely an academic exercise. Such plans merit preservation. They will become more precious

as time goes on because some will inevitably be destroyed. Furthermore, these historic streets and open spaces possess the very qualities which are recognised as conducive to good environment and essential to fine townscape. Their visual and psychological effect depend on subtle elements of scale, proportion and the like which can so easily be ruined by injudicious road widening or even the removal of a single significant building. The C.B.A. therefore considers that the historic plan must be preserved, both for its own sake and because it is adaptable to the needs of this present age' (ibid. 1).

In conclusion the C.B.A. was confident that when the towns were surveyed it 'would also demonstrate, to everyone concerned in town-planning, just how far we have inherited examples of the kind of good urban environment which planners dream of creating in new towns. The old deserves to be saved not merely because it is old but because it possesses qualities of permanent value to humanity' (ibid. 4).

In many ways it is unfortunate that the impetus of this campaign by the C.B.A. was diverted into different channels, when Duncan Sandys then Director of the Civic Trust piloted the Civic Amenities Act 1967 through Parliament. This had started with a concern to protect the settings of listed historic buildings, but was widened to encompass "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Ancient town-plans were mentioned among the criteria for designation of a 'Conservation Area' in the circular introducing the new act but almost all such designations have been for areas having exclusively visual qualities as townscape or groups of historic buildings. The clear emphasis in the C.B.A. memoranda on the essential structure of ancient town-plans as the basis of the character of towns has been lost.

The Civic Trust promoted the creation of Conservation Areas,

which it is the duty of local planning authorities to designate, and the enthusiasm of the C.B.A. was directed to matters more immediate, that is to the destruction of the evidence for town origins and history by the redevelopment of urban sites without proper archaeological investigation.

In 1972 the C.B.A. published The Erosion of History : Archaeology and Planning in Towns edited by Carolyn Heighway, the research officer who had gathered information from all local authorities of their development plans affecting historic towns and also investigated the amount of archaeological or historical research being conducted on the towns. On conservation areas it said that 'There is not much evidence that local planning authorities took serious and consistent account of the circular which advised that conservation areas might include "groups of buildings, open spaces, a historic street pattern or features of archaeological interest". Emphasis continues to be on areas where buildings of historic interest are still standing, and such considerations as an historic street pattern or features of archaeological interest have certainly not been allowed to override attention to traffic movement or other economic factors' (Heighway Erosion of History 15).

On the position in Scotland it recorded that little urban archaeology was taking place which meant that valuable sites were being lost without record. Of the twenty-three most important Scottish burghs (one of which was Dumfries) eleven were seriously threatened with redevelopment and eleven less seriously. It stated that work was urgently needed if evidence was not to be lost (ibid. 27). The relevant information on Dumfries was that the approximate date by which it could be called a town was 1186. Its 'walls' were classed as late and insubstantial as in other Scottish towns fortified in the eighteenth century. Some research was in progress on archaeology was recorded and this probably recognised the work of Mr. A.E.Truckell of the Burgh Museum. No architectural research

was noted. The estimated population increase 1969-85 was expected to be 19% which would probably be a natural progression. The town was marked as being in the class expecting minor development schemes, usually redevelopment in individual properties, or infill schemes, or minor road improvements. It is mentioned that in this class the central area of the town in most cases was a conservation area (ibid. 13). Unfortunately Dumfries was not and is not yet a designated conservation area, although it is patently an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The C.B.A. book recommended that the powers already vested in Local Authorities to designate Conservation Areas should be more fully used. It also said that a critical part of a survey of a town will be the preparation of archaeological town maps. It suggested that the ideal type was represented by the publication Historic Towns edited by Mrs. M.D. Lobell (1969), but that local maps of similar lines would be useful and would be an essential tool for both planners and archaeologists. 'Such maps would facilitate the formulation of policies or investigation and these policies could then be written into Local Authority Plans' (ibid. 60).

The twenty three most important Scottish burghs referred to already (ibid. 27) are those selected by the Scottish Urban Research Committee, for special study. In the booklet Scotland's Medieval Burghs: an archaeological heritage in danger published by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1972 the scope of the discussion was confined generally to archaeology. 'Changes must come and changes for the better should be welcomed. But something is wrong when change involves destroying without any record a vital part of the heritage of the past in Scotland's early burgh's (SAS. Med. Burghs 7).

In 1976 the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments section of the Scottish Development Department invited the Department of



# DUMFRIES

## Archaeology and Planning

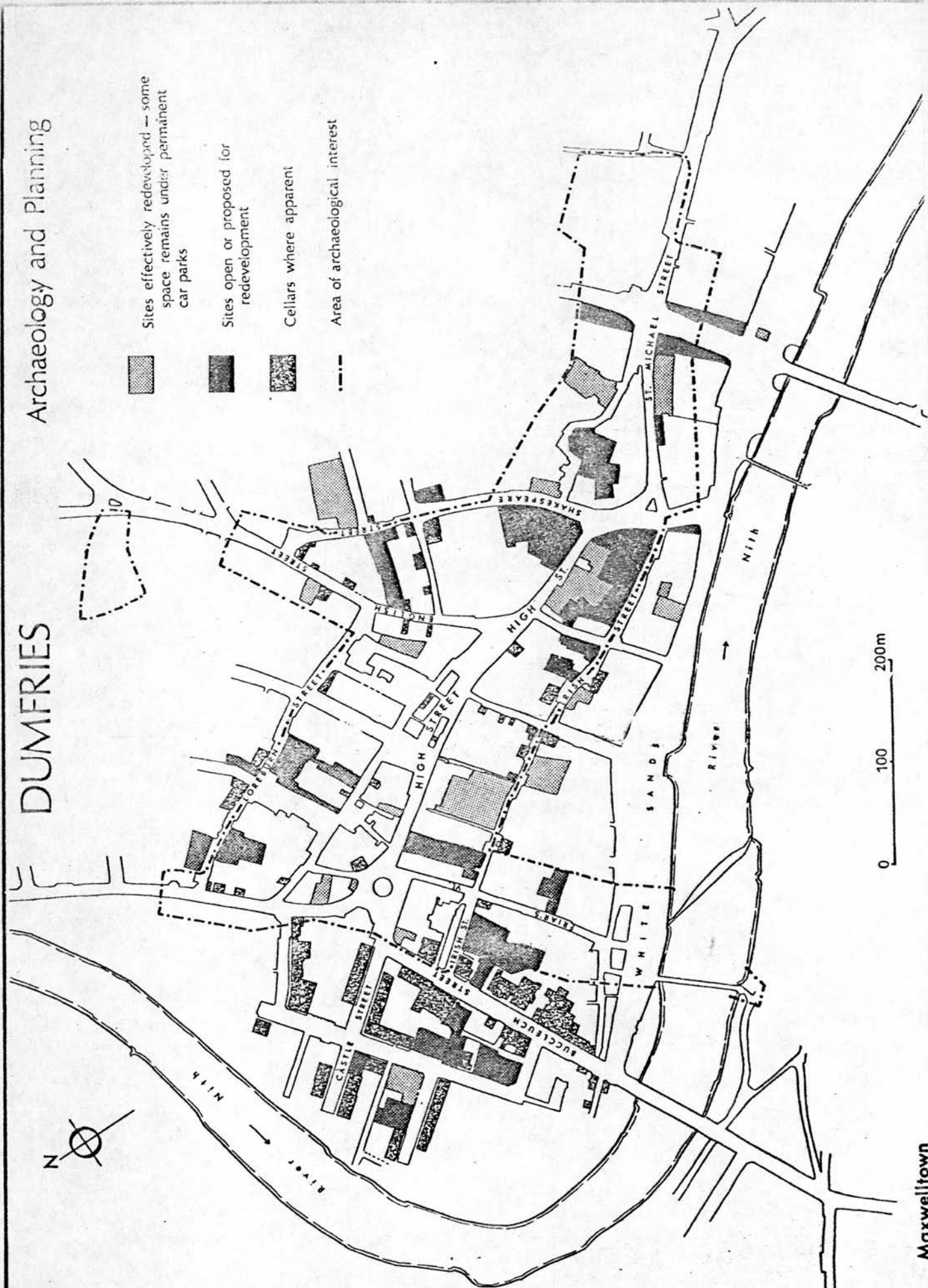


Fig. 35. Dumfries Archaeology & Planning (Gourlay)  
(form Gourlay and Turner Dumfries)

Archaeology, at Glasgow University to produce a series of reports on the historic towns of Scotland, to provide the background for further urban research and to furnish local authorities with the necessary historical and archaeological information. In 1977 a report on Historic Dumfries : the archaeological implications of development was issued by the Scottish Burgh Survey written by Anne Turner (history) and Robert Gourlay (archaeology). Fig. 35 shows the plan on 'Archaeology and Planning' from this report and defines an area of archaeological interest, which for some reason excludes the Townhead Moat area, and the site of the Chapel of the Willeis in lower Bank Street.

The rather tentative reference to 'a certain degree of deliberate planning of the layout' by only one of the co-authors, was discussed in the Introduction (above p. 15 et seq.). There is nothing here of the robust insistence by the C.B.A. in their memoranda, on the great importance and value today of the ancient town-plan at Dumfries. The authors of this latest report, do recommend that the area of the historic town should be designated as a Conservation Area so that development would be less likely to go ahead without consideration of the historic environment (Gourlay & Turner Dumfries 16). Quite properly this report is concerned with the opportunities for archaeological investigation and how advantage could be taken of them as they occur. There is need for a different emphasis if evidence for the past is to be used as a firm base for future development control policies.

The excellent recommendations of the third of the C.B.A. memoranda gives a more positive point to start from. It says that 'the natural consequences of defining historic areas of towns will, it is hoped, be eventually to give them legal protection ..... Beyond that, the establishment of an urban environment of high quality demands that historic areas should not be mere oases in a desert. The character of intervening areas must be safeguarded and plans made for their progressive improvements. The fragmentation of an historic town centre

into pockets of historic buildings is no more defensible than a preservation policy based on individual buildings. The aim should be to re-create town centres by a combination of preservation, restoration, conservation and sensitive rebuilding' (C.B.A. Planning Process 3). It is only through this kind of careful conservation of what remains of the past in the historic centre of Dumfries, and through carefully designed developments to complement it, that the special architectural and historic interest of the burgh can survive. The basis of such a process must be the full recognition of the essential role of the medieval town plan at Dumfries.